New Statesman

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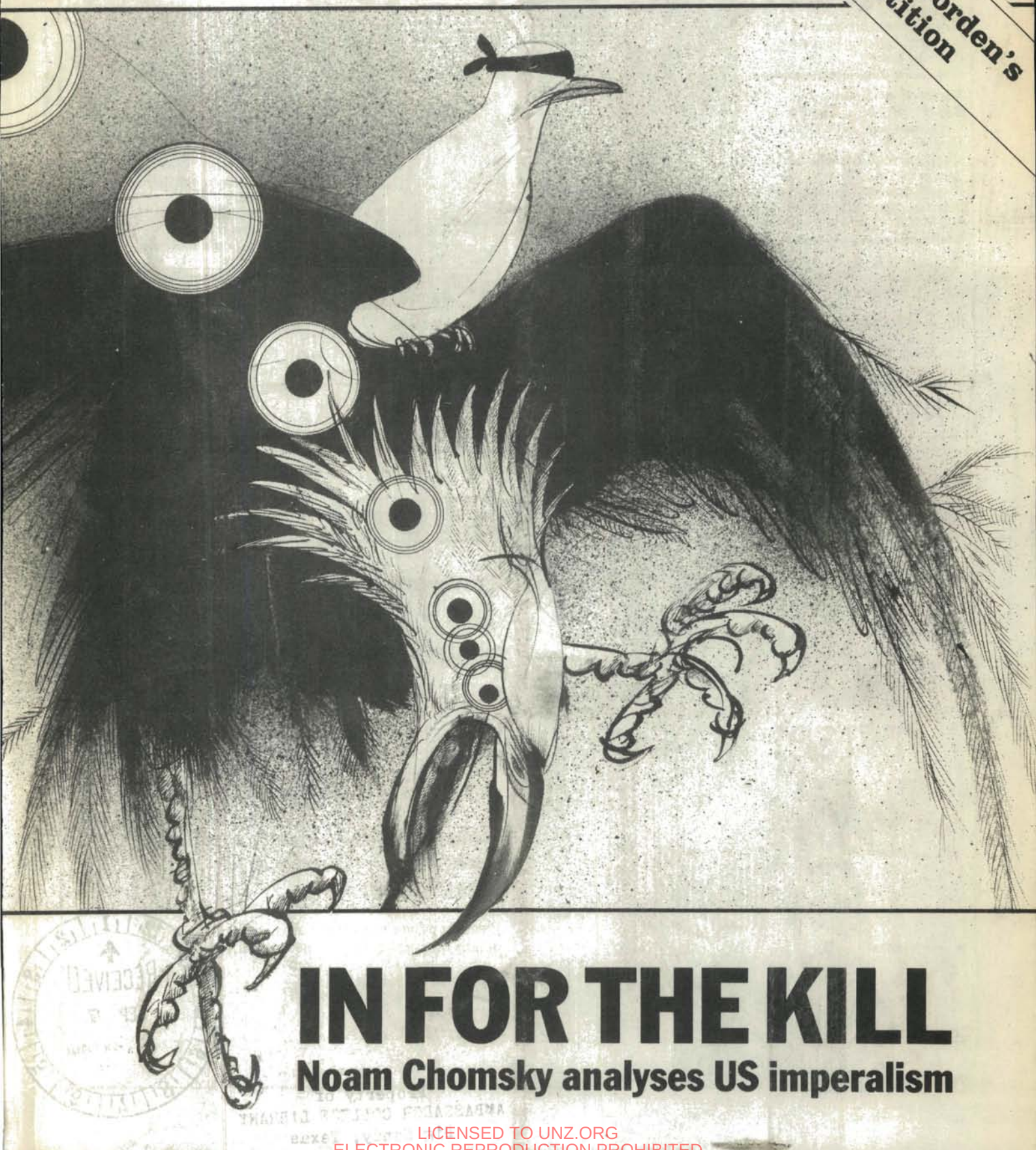
Frank Muir & Denis Norden's Weekend Competition



IN FOR THE KILL

Noam Chomsky analyses US imperialism

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New Statesman

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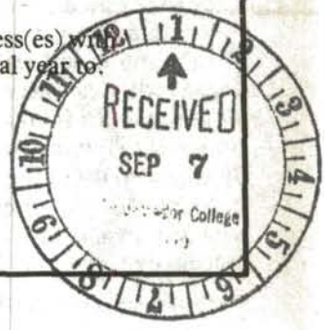

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New Statesman Vol 106 No 2732 29 July 1983

Looking after the boys

AS WE GO to press the government, the Bank of England and the Stock Exchange are in the closing stages of cooking up behind the scenes an underhand deal to get round the law. The long case of the Stock Exchange and the Restrictive Practices Court is being brought abruptly to an end in a way which simply ignores the due process of law and which proves that there is one rule for the friends of the Thatcher administration and another for the rest. It is an extraordinary and extraordinarily cynical position for the self-styled party of law and order to have adopted.

Until now, every Labour and every Tory minister of trade has taken the view that he should do nothing to interfere with the law. The process has been in train for seven years, since 1976 when 'service industries' were brought within the scope of the (Tory) 1973 Restrictive Trade Practices Act, which had initially only applied to making and selling things. It was all part of the very Tory philosophy that collusive restraints to competition encouraged inefficiency and were therefore against both the consumer's and the national interest.

Along with everyone else, therefore, the Stock Exchange was required to register its rules, which are the embodiment of its network of restrictive practices. The Office of Fair Trading examined the evidence. The arguments as to whether individual rules were or were not against the public interest were meticulously prepared. Millions of pounds (mainly in lawyer's fees) have been spent by both sides. The case was set down for hearing in January.

There always has been an argument that the issues involved could be better, or quicker, or more cheaply examined in some other way; but a legal process was in train. Over the intervening years the Stock Exchange has chosen to get itself into the ridiculous position of defending every aspect of the status quo on the argument that to concede any reform of any of its rules would undermine its original case. But that, to put it mildly, is its problem. The system whereby the same high fixed commission is charged on all share dealings is not maintained anywhere else in the world. But regardless of the merits of other Stock Exchange rules it is astonishing that the government now feels able by retrospective action simply to set aside a case that is in full progress.

If the governing Council of the Stock Exchange had not been so totally blinkered at the outset, it could have modernised itself voluntarily as stock markets in other countries have done. But the majority then seemed to think that all that was required was to lobby an incoming Tory government and the rules would be changed for them retrospectively. In May 1979, with Thatcher and John Nott, they were wrong. In June 1983, with Thatcher and Cecil Parkinson (and with her man as governor of the Bank), it seems that they have in the end been proved right. □

Who will help the Tamils?

SRI LANKA is burning again. Several hundred Tamils have been killed in the past week, and at least 20,000 have been made homeless. Now the Sri Lankan government says that it is creating an emergency committee to provide food and shelter for the Tamil refugees. The Tamils can be forgiven if they do not show much gratitude for this act of charity, for this week's horrific violence, in which Sinhalese lynch-mobs roamed the streets of Colombo, attacking anyone who happened to be a Tamil, is the direct fault of the Sri Lankan government itself.

For years, leading Sri Lankan politicians have encouraged their fellow Sinhalese to see the minority Tamils as second-class citizens. Matching action with words, they have introduced laws and regulations which have made it almost impossible for the Tamils to find decent education or employment. They have also supervised a programme of colonisation under which Tamil farmland has been handed over to the Sinhalese.

'Law and order' was one of President Jayawardene's main slogans when he was elected in 1977. Yet there is neither law nor order in Sri Lanka: Jayawardene himself has seen to that. Under the Public Security Act, the police and army are allowed to bury or cremate dead bodies without any need for an inquest or post mortem. Under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, people can be detained for up to 18 months without trial or explanation. Torture has become a normal part of police procedure, as Amnesty International's report this month showed.

In Britain, there may be a tendency to view the violence in Sri Lanka as part of some unfathomable feud in a faraway country of which we know nothing. Yet Britain is inescapably involved. It was Britain, as the colonial power, which brought Indian Tamils to Ceylon to work the tea estates. It was Britain which encouraged the indigenous Tamils to help with the running of the colonial bureaucracy. When Britain departed, in 1948, the Sinhalese took over the country and began to exact their revenge. The plantation Tamils were stripped of their citizenship, and the indigenous Tamils were stripped of their jobs.

Even today, Britain's connections with Sri Lanka are close. Sri Lanka's main export, tea, is still controlled by the British companies who set the price. Sinhalese colonisation of Tamil areas is being helped by a huge irrigation scheme, partly paid for with British money. Certainly the Tamils themselves consider that Britain has some responsibility for their fate. Is it too much to hope that the British government may, at last, seek to make amends? In October, President Jayawardene will pay an official visit to London. He should be told that Britain is no longer prepared to bankroll a man who is presiding over a campaign of near-genocide against part of his population. □

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Penalties pile up on private contractor

PRIVATE INDUSTRY's ability to run local services more cheaply and efficiently than council departments is coming increasingly into question. Pritchard's, one of the leaders in the privatisation field, has just lost its contract with Kingston council for grass verge maintenance while its 38 garden maintenance workers in Wandsworth are on strike. They had been doing overtime in Kingston to try and salvage the contract.

However, the garden maintenance contract in Wandsworth is in jeopardy, because Pritchard's have already run up some £45,000 worth of penalties for work not done properly and/or on time. In an attempt to run the operation more efficiently, Pritchard's had unilaterally introduced a piece-work system, in which the company decided the price for each job and invited their employees to take it or leave it. After trying the system for two days, the 38 workers decided to strike. Although Pritchard's say they could earn up to £33 per day, the men fear their fortnightly earnings might be as low as £35. All 38 are members of NUPE, although Pritchard's say only eight of them are full-time employees; the remainder have been taken on as casual staff only.

A sense of grievance among the men had been building up before the introduction of the piece-work system. The men believed that they would be paid £132 a week, of which £80 would be basic pay. Pritchard's now say that in their initial statement, seen by councillors, they did promise a total of £132 a week; but in their actual tender, which both councillors and workers appear to be unaware of, they said pay would be between £102 and £127, depending on overtime and status. The men also say that at their Frogmore depot there is no mess-room, no soap, no towels and no toilet paper. Equipment and proper clothing are in short supply, they say.

One of the garden workers has been sacked because he says he damaged his finger in a van door and could not therefore work at the pace Pritchard's wanted. The company says he was not sacked as he was only a casual worker.

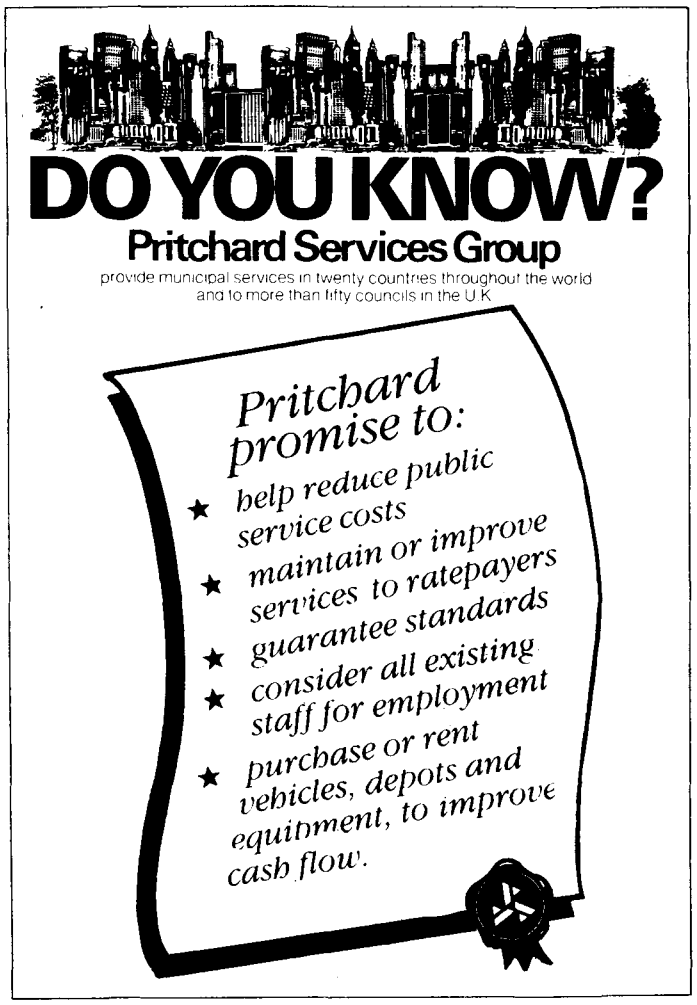
Questioned about Pritchard's performance, council leader Paul Beresford insists the council has no responsibility for the wages and conditions of people employed on private contracts. He had also attributed the failure to keep up with the garden maintenance work to poor weather. However, Pritchard's 18-month old street cleaning contract has not been much more successful. On several occasions, the company has run up many more penalty points than the minimum stipulated as necessary to break the contract. Performance appears to be deteriorating. In the most recent four-week period, 23 May to 19 June, Council inspectors awarded 784 penalties for streets omitted or inadequately cleaned, worse than the previous period and the similar time last year. Then, council officers said the situation was 'unacceptable' and set up two temporary penalty-free areas in which the inexperienced and casual workforce which replaced the council's street cleaners could receive 'intensive training.'

Wandsworth council's problem is that it has invested its own reputation in the successful privatisation of street cleaning – and something of the Tory party's as well. 'Where Wandsworth has led, let other Conservative Councils follow', Mrs Thatcher told last year's party conference. Pritchard's have contracts with 60 other councils, as well as some lucrative international contracts. If, however, Wandsworth council does finally hold them to the agreement, Pritchard's will be obliged to pay some other firm to carry out the services for the remainder of the five-year contract.

Wandsworth Council's attempt to get its services on the cheap has already run into another block, when Grandmet Waste Services, who run the council's refuse service, were instructed by the Central Arbitration Committee to pay the dustmen more. NUPE is considering taking the council to court to enforce the ruling.

Pritchard's public image is being handled by Michael Forsyth Associates, the PR company of new Tory MP and Westminster councillor Michael Forsyth. His pamphlet *Re-Servicing Britain* was published in 1980 by the Adam Smith Institute (see p.8). In it he declared that 'as a means of cutting the costs of local government while at the same time improving rather than reducing the services, privatisation has been staggeringly successful practically everywhere it has been introduced.'

Quentin McDermott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Film prize goes to Baker

HOPES IN the film industry that governmental responsibility for the cinema would pass to the Arts Minister have been disappointed. Film has stayed in the amalgamated Department of Trade and Industry, under the authority of hi-tech enthusiast Kenneth Baker, reshuffled from Information Technology to Minister for Industry.

It is thought that it was Baker's personal desire to group all the communication industries together, along with information technology, computer systems, British Telecom, the Post Office and the British Technology Group, which put film in his hands. Without any announcement of a change of policy, we would seem, therefore, to have a ministry of telecommunications. Only the BBC, still under the control of the Home Office, stays outside this portfolio.

It was not inevitable that film should stay with telecommunications. In October 1982, the all-party House of Commons select committee on Education, Science and the Arts, chaired by Christopher Price, recommended that film should go to the arts ministry. Sir Richard Attenborough has campaigned for this, Paul Channon, the former arts minister, recommended it and Cecil Parkinson, now head of the DTI, indicated his readiness to relinquish responsibility for films.

When Lord Gowrie, a keen and discerning film-goer, was appointed minister of arts, this seemed to strengthen the case for him to take over film. However, he had no desire to tangle with the forceful Mr Baker and his emergent empire. Gowrie had, in any case, already succeeded in moving the arts ministry outside the Department of Education and Science and giving it independent status within the Privy Council office. The educational aspect of film – the British Film Institute and the National Film and Television School – do, however, remain with Gowrie.

The previous and unlamented minister responsible for film, Ian Sproat, was engaged on a thorough review of the industry when he achieved the almost impossible for a Tory MP, and lost his seat. Baker has now taken over his review and has interviewed a number of the people who made submissions to Sproat. While he may lack Gowrie's appreciation of film content, he appears encouragingly enthusiastic about film as an industry. 'He's very keen, there's no doubt about that' reported Anthony Smith, director of the BFI. Baker's recommendations can be expected in October.

Bob Woffinden

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Labour's heretics speak freely

LABOUR's thinking Left met in conference last weekend at Manchester and, while thunder crashed ominously overhead, declared itself delighted that it was now possible to speak heretically without being denounced.

Several hundred people responded to a call from the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, part of the 'soft Left', to come and discuss 'Has Socialism a Future?'. In the two and a half days of plenary session, debate and workshops, no consensus emerged on what socialism was or is, and whether it has a future. But there seemed a near unanimous feeling that the Left must turn away from an obsession with winning positions in the party structure towards stirring the hearts and minds of the people outside it.

In the final session of the conference, Robin Cook MP, Kinnock's campaign manager, said that the Labour Party had 'no vehicle for reaching the uncommitted'; it was not geared to mass politics, while the strategy and language of Left leaders, like Tony Benn, had been geared to internal debate. It had not tried to propagate the socialist values 'which must be the bedrock of socialist policies', unlike Mrs Thatcher who talked of nothing else but her values.

Peter Hain, the unsuccessful Labour candidate in Putney, also criticised Benn, without naming him, for having claimed that Labour's remaining 8½ million voters were self-evidently all committed socialists, but thought the loss of Benn was a tragedy creating a disturbing vacuum in the leadership. He argued that the Left must state the importance of Labour's right wing staying in the party. His strategy for the next few years was to leave the policies alone (apart from jettisoning withdrawal from the EEC); to draw up a policy for public sector unions; to develop a strategy for dealing with the Alliance; to campaign on democracy; and to develop a new 'historic bloc' of women, 'greens', and specific class issues.

Like Audrey Wise, speaking earlier in debate with Barry Hindess, Hain rejected the idea of a broad anti-Thatcher alliance. This was not a debate that got very far, however, as no one clarified whether it was an alliance of parties to win an electoral majority, or an extra-parliamentary alliance to campaign on specific issues.

On the previous day, Barry Hindess had joined forces with Beatrix Campbell to argue the importance of campaigning for the politics of democracy and liberation rather than the defence of putative class interests.

Hindess and Campbell distanced their analysis from that of fellow platform speaker Jeremy Seabrook, who delivered a familiar elegy to the lost virility of the old working class, long-since seduced by the trinkets of a consumer society.

Among other basic principles that were criticised over the weekend, by Stuart Holland, Alec Nove and Geoff Hodgson, were the supremacy of planning over market forces and the value of nationalisation. Despite frequent appeals to feminism as a crucial part of any new socialist bloc, the conference was attended by many more men than women, no visible black people and almost all were drawn from the 1968 generation – the theme of the Saturday night disco.

Sarah Benton

Prison protests rumble on

SOLICITORS acting for the family of Jimmy Anderson, the prisoner in Wormwood Scrubs who alleges he has been assaulted by prison officers, have taken legal action to force the Home Office to allow them to see him.

The Home Office has refused Kate Akester, solicitor with Birnberg and Co, access to Anderson on the grounds of 'simultaneous ventilation'. This is a Home Office rule which obliges a prisoner to institute a complaint through internal prison channels before he can seek legal advice on possible external proceedings. Akester is seeking the right to advise Anderson on possible civil proceedings over his allegations of assault. The Home Office rule obliges a prisoner to disclose his case to the prison authorities before he can take any civil action, and also opens him up to Rule 47/12 of the Prison Regulations, under which a prisoner can be punished for making false or malicious complaints.

Mr Justice Woolf granted leave to Birnberg's to pursue the application as it concerned an important legal principle. However, it may not be heard at the Court of Appeal until September, meaning Anderson would have to wait until then to know whether he can take action over events which he alleges took place on 16 June.

The trouble at Wormwood Scrubs is only one of a growing number of incidents of protest and violence in Britain's crammed jails. *Labour Herald* has received a letter from a prisoner at Highpoint prison near Newmarket, saying there was a serious riot there three days before the general election, following which 50 prisoners were transferred. A prisoner at Albany prison has also smuggled out a letter to the *Guardian* listing the grievances which led to the Albany protest. Since then, hundreds of prisoners have hastily been moved round Britain's prisons in an attempt to avert further nationwide rioting. As well as far too many petty criminals, Britain's prisons contain a growing number of political Irish prisoners who are aware of the better prison rights won in Northern Ireland.

Terry O'Halloran

MISCELLANY

On safari

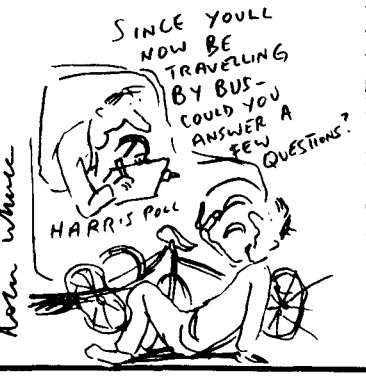
Sir Alfred Sherman, the tubby right-winger who is about to undertake a tour of Central America, is clearly entering into the spirit of the thing: he turned up at a London party the other day sporting a sombrero and a safari suit. Sir Alfred, whose telegraphic address is 'Shermania', is making the trip in order to write articles for the *Daily Telegraph*. But there will be an incidental benefit for him: he will escape from the miseries of tourist-infested London. Sir Alfred has strong views on this subject. In 1977 he wrote an article for the *Spectator* in which he described the 'discomfort, inconvenience and worse suffered by Londoners as a result of the growing armies of tourists'. Because of the 'plague' of tourism, he added, 'our public transport is increasingly crowded with people who neither queue nor bath'. However, although Sherman is happy to accuse others of being smelly, he is rather touchy about having the same charge levelled at him, even as a figure of speech. After describing Sherman as 'malodorous' last month, we received a fearsome letter from his lawyers, Peter Carter-Ruck and partners (whose telegraphic address is 'Libel, London WC2'). We had better say no more.

Housey-housey

Barratts, well known for their excellent houses, have been keeping their lawyers busy this month defending their spotless reputation. But they were unsuccessful in their attempt to stop the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* from publishing details of a secret report prepared by Gordon District Council about some of their houses. After some comic exchanges with the Sheriff (the Scottish equivalent of a magistrate), with Barratts refusing to give their reasons for seeking an injunction because the press would report them, the *P and J* ran the story all over the front page, plus a report of the court proceedings. The story pointed out the criticisms made in the secret report were given credence by the fact that the council was spending £103,000 on a programme of remedial work, although Barratts, who built the houses at the start of the oil boom in 1974-75, could of course be entirely blameless. Mere days later, Barratt solicitors had once more to roll into action, when the *Guardian* ran two cartoon strips on 18 and 19 July, referring to 'Parrott Houses'. Carla Ostrer's 'What the Dickens' strip is usually utterly impenetrable, but on this occasion appears to have been clearly understood. A week later the *Guardian* apologised unreservedly to Barratt Developments plc for any embarrassment that might have been caused inadvertently by associating that company with the ideas portrayed in those cartoons.

In a hurry

'I've never been stopped by a pollster, and I don't know anyone who has'. Such anti-polling bar talk will no longer be heard round here.



One *NS* staffer was questioned over the weekend by Harris Research Centre – the Tories' private pollsters. The subject, though, was not politics but London Transport. LT have commissioned Harris to find out what Londoners make of the new travelcards, zonal fares and the like. Our loyal *NS* commuter, though, has more faith in London Transport than the Harris researcher. 'Are you using public transport to get around for your interviews?', our man asked. 'Good lord no', came the reply. 'If we did, we'd never get the survey finished'.

Porn and the PM

Our man in the dirty raincoat returned from a foray into Soho last week clutching a small pink voucher. We grabbed it from his gangrenous hands. 'Up to £500 Free Cash Bonus', it read. 'Everyone's a Winner! – When you visit your local Private or Sven Sex Shop'. In order to stand a chance of winning one of the exciting prizes (which range from £500 cash to a 'sex magazine worth £1.75') you have to answer the following question: 'Who is the Prime Minister of this country?' Quite ticklish, as they say in the trade.

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Cut-rate Scotland

BITTER confrontation between the Scottish Office and four Scottish local authorities reached its climax last week, a likely forerunner of similar conflicts in England and Wales. The increasingly authoritarian powers assumed and exercised over recent years by Scottish Secretary George Younger are soon to be imitated south of the border. In effect, the powers cancel local authorities' traditional right to decide their level of services and to levy rates accordingly.

In 1981 Younger gave himself power to cut any authority's rate support grant in the middle of the financial year if he considered its spending plans to be 'excessive and unreasonable'. This led to his prolonged confrontation with the then Labour-controlled Lothian region and an enforced reduction of £30 million in the region's grant. Last year he extended his powers so that he can now forcibly set the actual rate that has to be levied by an individual council.

In May this year he announced he was proposing to reduce the rates of five councils by between 3p and 15p in the pound. The following month, after consultations, he dropped action against Shetland Islands Council (the financial impact of oil developments apparently had not been appreciated) and modified the penalties for the other authorities so that Lothian faced a 6p reduction, Glasgow 3p, Stirling 2p and Kirkcaldy 2p. This is equivalent to cutting spending in the four areas by about £19 million, a reduction that will diminish services significantly.

THE LABOUR PARTY, which controls three of the four councils, organised a campaign against the cutbacks that was better co-ordinated and more effective than previously, but ultimately powerless. In Parliament last week Younger was given the necessary authority to make the cuts and the councils were given a month to comply. In Lothian, the three Alliance councillors who hold the balance of power in the region decided to boycott Tuesday's special council meeting. Their abstention enabled the Conservatives' proposed cuts to be passed, bringing the total axed from Lothian's budget over the past three years to well over £60 million. Much to the annoyance of the Conservatives, Glasgow District Council's Labour leader Jean McFadden has warned that the city's prestigious Burrell Art Gallery, which is due to open in October, might suffer from the cuts.

For England and Wales the government is expected – possibly this week – to publish a White Paper outlining what have become known as the 'rate-capping' proposals. The idea is to introduce a statutory power to set the rate levels of selected authorities, and a reserve power to put a rate limit on all authorities. While these measures may differ in detail from those in Scotland, their effect will be the same – a fierce and escalating battle between central and local government.

Rob Edwards

Acid rain falls at home

ENVIRONMENTAL groups in Britain are shaping up for a major confrontation with the government and the CEGB over acid rain.

At a meeting in the House of Commons last week, the Socialist Environment and Resources Association (SERA) told environmentalists that fish in Scotland have started dying as a result of atmospheric pollution; that rain falling in parts of Britain is as acid as that which has caused large-scale ecological damage in Scandinavia, Germany, and Russia; and that, as far as sulphur dioxide is concerned, the UK is the most prolific polluter of the atmosphere in Western Europe.

Acid rain – or, to use the scientific term, acid deposition – is a by-product of both industrialisation and partial measures to reduce pollution. Smoke generated by factories, and especially by power stations, contains large quantities of sulphur and nitrogen: when the height of chimney stacks was raised – to lessen the pollution we breathe in – the smoke began to be pumped high in the air, falling to earth hundreds of miles away. The sulphates and nitrates accumulate over the years, until eventually they trigger an environmental reaction.

Because of the prevailing air currents in Europe, the Scandinavian countries were the first to experience the effects of acidification. In Sweden, one-fifth of all lakes have been seriously polluted, and 4,000 are now incapable of supporting fish life. Five thousand square miles of Norwegian lakeland are similarly barren.

Ten years ago, the problem was restricted to Norway and Sweden, but it is now causing extreme concern in Central Europe and North America. Two thousand square miles of polluted woodland in West Germany have been designated a total damage area, and a similar area of forest in Yugoslavia has perished since 1970.

Large-scale environmental damage has been reported in Poland, Czechoslovakia, the USSR, and Canada, where Environment Minister John Roberts has warned: 'Altogether, we are talking about a substantial portion (about 8 per cent) of our Gross National ▶ Product . . . at risk because of acid rain.' In the USA one Senator estimates the cost of atmospheric acid precipitation at $5 billion per year, possibly rising to $15 billion by the end of the century.

The solution to sulphur-based pollution – cleaning industrial smoke before it leaves the factory or power station chimney – is already technologically feasible, and the decision whether to desulphurise is now economic and political. The OECD has calculated that desulphurisation would add about 3 per cent to the cost of producing energy, roughly equal to the amount of money currently being spent on countering acid rain damage.

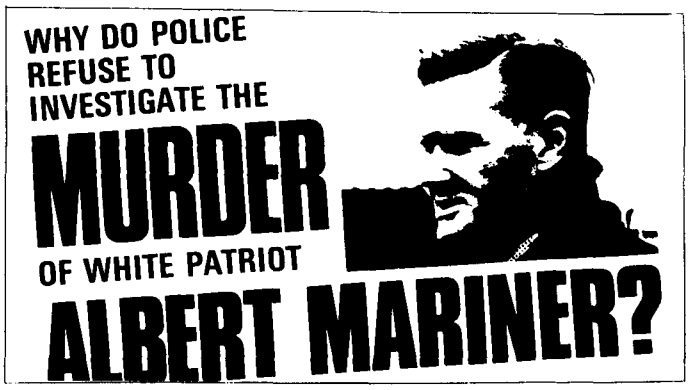
The additional 3 per cent is regarded as an acceptable figure to those countries already experiencing the effects of atmospheric pollution, but is out of the question in places which have not yet felt the acid touch. The UK is in the latter party. Britain produces a quarter of Western Europe's estimated 20 million tons of airborne sulphur dioxide per year, but is strongly resisting pressure to desulphurise, arguing that more research should be undertaken before funds are committed.

SERA called the House of Commons meeting to draw attention to the first signs of acidic pollution in Britain. This has happened in Scotland, where Lochs Enoch and Fleet in Galloway have lost their entire fish stocks; the Welsh Water Authority has reported 'many of the upland streams, rivers and lakes draining afforested catchments in Dyfed and Gwynedd cannot now support natural fish population'; and in parts of the Lake District, the situation is similar to that in Sweden ten years ago.

Steve Elsworth

Rally of British fascists

THIS WEEK while fascists gather in Italy to celebrate the centenary of Mussolini's birth, Britain's National Front is planning its own non-sectarian fascist get-together – 'a riot in Tottenham, North London on 30 July' – as Martin Webster told a meeting of Loyalists in Coleraine, according to the *Irish Times*. Those invited include the British Movement, the British National Party, the Ku Klux Klan and of course the Loyalists who, according to Webster, have not 'lost their guts to fight against the black invasion'.



If the rally is not banned (as community groups in Haringey hope it will be) it will be the second National Front intrusion into the area this summer. On 27 April the Labour council, facing an injunction under the Representation of People Act, voted to allow the National Front to hold a meeting at High Cross Lower School on 3 May. Although councillors had not told local people about the possibility of the meeting, 700 people, black and white, turned up at three days' notice to picket it. The police arrested 35, none of them National Front members or supporters. One of those arrested claims he was beaten by police and had to spend two days in hospital.

In the face of the anger felt by black and anti-fascist groups about the events of 3 May, the National Front have launched a campaign demanding a public inquiry into the death of one of their supporters, pensioner Albert Mariner. Mariner was hit by a brick at the picket, but died of a heart attack in his home the following day. Saturday's rally, the National Front claim, is to commemorate his death.

Supporters of the National Front have been asked to assemble at Tottenham Hale station, lay a wreath at High Cross Lower School and then march to Tottenham police station and hold a rally. Anti-fascist groups and black organisations have set up a mobilising committee to 'keep out the National Front'. They are asking people to assemble at the junction of Ferry Lane and Station Road N17 from mid-day onwards. They are also asking the NUR and the TSSA, the unions representing train drivers and station attendants, to close Tottenham Hale and Seven Sisters stations for the day.

Amrit Wilson

Further details of the demonstration from 01-801 2837.

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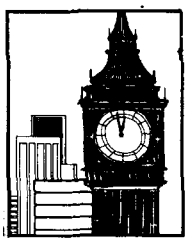

PETER KELLNER, Political Editor

Labour's Left rediscovers the joys of thinking

TONY BENN is probably more concerned with political propriety than any other contemporary politician. He does not leak. He does not indulge in personal abuse. He keeps to issues. In all these things he practices what he preaches. It is all the more paradoxical then that the greatest flowering of tolerant and open discussion of Labour's past failures and future direction for many years should take place at the very moment when Benn has been relegated to the margin of political life.

Imagine what would have happened had Benn held his Bristol seat at the general election. The subsequent story of the Labour Party might well have gone something like this. Benn stands for the Labour leadership. So do Neil Kinnock, Roy Hattersley and Peter Shore. Shore is eliminated in the first ballot; most of his support transfers to Hattersley. In the second ballot the left vote in the unions and among MPs is fairly evenly divided between Benn and Kinnock, but in the constituencies Benn leads comfortably. Kinnock is eliminated, and a run-off takes place between Benn and Hattersley. Enough of Kinnock's supporters in the unions and among MPs then either abstain or switch to Hattersley to give the Right victory.

It is possible to paint other scenarios, giving either Benn or Kinnock victory. However, Benn's absence from the contest denies Hattersley almost any chance of victory and hands the prize to Kinnock.

Almost as important as the result of a contest including Benn would have been the manner of the campaigning. While Benn himself would have behaved as impeccably as usual, some – not many, but enough – of his supporters would have turned it into another of those simple, cosmic good-against-evil battles that have so consumed the party since 1979. So would some – not many, but enough – of Benn's detractors. So would much of the media.

Instead, we have leadership and deputy leadership contests that have so far been as civilised as these things can reasonably be expected to be. As I argued last week, the candidates have yet to supply a working definition of 'democratic socialism'; but the contests have not obliterated the chance of others to debate Labour's future without every statement being subject to a test of loyalty, or a charge of treachery. Benn's absence, in other words, has not only ensured Kinnock's victory, it has facilitated the very kind of political discussion that he seeks.

Not that the results of those discussions will be wholly to Benn's liking. Already withdrawal from the Common Market has, for all practical purposes, been dropped as party policy. All four leadership contenders – including Eric Heffer, the shadow cabinet's spokesman on Europe and a long-standing opponent of the EEC – now talk about challenging and improving it from within. The Labour Co-ordinating Committee's newsletter distributed this week is equally clear. The LCC now says:

> It will not be credible to go into the 1984 EEC assembly elections, let alone the next general election, calling for withdrawal . . . The Party needs a new internationalist strategy that is certainly critical of the EEC, and in particular the CAP, but recognises that we cannot just shut up shop and isolate ourselves from the international community.

Today such statements cause hardly a stir. But what if the LCC, or Eric Heffer, had said that even three months ago? They would have been accused of defaulting on conference policy. What is more, the accusations would have been valid. It has been conference policy for some years that Britain can only hope to solve its economic problems outside the EEC. And, despite the general election, that remains party policy today.

ONE MAIN argument is put forward for both accepting the legitimacy of the policy in the past and for changing it now. It is that the EEC is changing (for example through the inclusion of countries like Spain, Portugal and Greece) so that what is sensible in 1983 may not be sensible in 1988.

Such an argument is spurious. The case for withdrawal, successfully argued at successive conferences, has nothing to do with the EEC's size, but with the constraints that the fact of membership is said to impose. It was argued that a Labour government keeping Britain in the Common Market between 1983 and 1988 would be unable to remove those constraints. It is now being implicitly argued that a Conservative government in power during the same period *will* be able to make it possible for Britain to live with the EEC. The only way out of that logical trap is to admit that the policy was wrong this year, too.

In all but name, of course, this is what the Left is now starting to acknowledge. Having proudly won the battles that produced Labour's most left-wing manifesto since the war, it now discovers that the victory was hardly worth winning. And the reason, as the LCC newsletter candidly admits, is that the policies for which the Left won approval were themselves often the product of sterile thinking:

> By the 1981 Deputy Leadership Contest it was clear that there was a stalemate in the Party between Right and Left . . . Policy became frozen as no-one dared rethink right or left mythology, whichever was dominant in each area. There was no room for innovation and no consensus on what popular appeal the Party would make or what image it should promote.

One particular proposal the LCC now makes is that Labour should drop its opposition to council house sales and espouse a new policy that acknowledges the wish of most people to be home-owners. According to Peter Shore this week, Labour always has been kind to the home-owner; the Party's problem has been that it is too shame-faced to make a virtue of the fact.

I should not be at all surprised if housing policy becomes one of the most important ideological issues for Labour over the next two or three years. It touches on all the fundamental issues that Labour now needs to rethink: individual freedom (to own or rent), equality (few things are more regressive than Britain's present housing tax relief and subsidy system) and the role of markets (the right to own a home implies the right to buy and sell).

Of these three issues, the role of the market is the most tricky. As Geoff Hodgson says in a paper* for last weekend's LCC conference in Manchester, 'it has become habitual to *define* socialism as the "absence of markets" on the Left.' More generally, as the occasional theological debates over Clause Four have shown, the traditional litmus test of left-versus-right has concerned such issues as planning and nationalisation. To quote Hodgson again: 'It would be appropriate to describe the most prominent view of socialism found on the Labour Left as "Stalinism plus parliamentary democracy".'

If now the Left is beginning to confront the issue of how socialism and markets can co-exist; if Roy Hattersley is now calling for a system of controlling the City more comprehensively than has been demanded by any recent Labour manifesto; if Hattersley's speeches ten years ago as shadow education minister on the evils of public schools are practically interchangeable with Kinnock's today; if the Common Market is no longer an issue dividing the party – we could, just possibly, be on the verge of something genuinely exciting in the evolution of the Labour Party. Who knows, we may even end up with a working definition of that elusive term, 'democratic socialism'. □

**Decentralisation and markets*, published in the current issue of *Chartist*.

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NEW RIGHT

The Omega Project

Adam Smith would turn in his grave if he knew what was being done in his name. Dorothy Wade and Justine Picardie trace the rise of a right-wing pressure group

MRS THATCHER'S kitchen cabinet will soon be decidedly bare. Her economic adviser, Sir Alan Walters, is going to the United States in September and Ferdinand Mount is departing from the Number Ten policy unit. Even her fiery knight, Sir Alfred Sherman, is leaving the nest and winging his way to Central America – reportedly in high dudgeon after an altercation with Norman Tebbit over treacherous civil servants and leaked documents.

All of which leaves the field open for the young hopefuls of the Right and none more hopeful than the Adam Smith Institute, many of whose fresh-faced crusaders have just arrived in the House of Commons. As one Adam Smith protégé announced: 'I'm so dry they call me crusty'. He was speaking as one of a clique of old boys from St Andrew's University who are now Tory new boys in Parliament. They include such evangelists of privatisation as Chris Chope, ex-leader of Wandsworth Council and recently elected MP for Southampton Itchen, and the Stirling MP, Michael Forsyth, a former Westminster City councillor.

The driving forces behind this parliamentary invasion are Madsen Pirie and Eamon Butler, a dry and dusty duo who have set up camp in Little Smith St, a few hundred yards from the House of Commons. The Adam Smith Institute was dreamed up when these two St Andrew's graduates met later in their academic careers, in the US. Along with Butler's brother Stuart, who was working in the free-market orientated Heritage Institute in Washington, they decided that Britain needed a Heritage-style think-tank of the type that had become common in the US since the Sixties. These institutes, often attached to universities, like the Virginia 'Public Choice' Institute, were committed to finding non-government solutions to policy-making and promoting monetarist, 'supply-side' economics.

So in 1978 the courageous entrepreneurs registered the Adam Smith Institute as an American charity with only a Virginia PO Box and £1,000 to its name. But it was when Butler and Pirie returned to London that the Institute began to flourish and curry favour with the Thatcherite Right, which was to be swept into power the following year. They found ideological patrons in the economist Hayek, one of Thatcher's heroes, and other academics of a monetarist disposition.

Financial aid was also at hand, as British businessmen welcomed the arrival of yet another free-market pressure group who would lobby for their cause with particular single-mindedness and aggression. British United Industrialists, an unincorporated association which collects money from companies and channels it to free enterprise causes, made overtures of friendship with a generous donation.

The Adam Smith Institute is coy, not to say tight-lipped, about the source of its finance, but many large companies, both national and multi-national, wish it well. Its book *Roads and the Private Sector* contains a chapter by Neville Soper of Tarmac on the economics of road-building with private finance. Other contributors include a City financier and a civil engineering contractor.

The Institute is equally secretive about how it spends the money its industrialist friends provide. It has not submitted its accounts to the Charity Commissioners since its registration as a British charity in 1981, and in March this year it was sent a reminder of its duty to lodge accounts annually. Dr Pirie (who has, incidentally, a black belt in karate) insists testily that the accounts are being prepared at the moment.

UNTIL RECENTLY the Institute was a rather marginal organisation. Its main activity was to encourage young Tory rebels such as Michael Forsyth and Peter Young – both of whom made their names in the Federation of Conservative Students – to produce slim volumes on quangos and privatisation of refuse collection, as well as a register of wetness and dryness among MPs.

But the Institute is now engaged on its most ambitious piece of work so far – its grand plan for the future of Britain, called the Omega Project. This policy-making exercise mirrored the pre-election work of the Conservative Research Department, who received Omega progress reports at every stage in the last year. The 1,000-page study, to be published in October, will contain radical proposals for every government department. But the proud parents claim that it is more than a collection of ideas – each proposal in the report will be followed by a section written in legislative language explaining exactly how it can be implemented.

Dr Pirie says: 'It takes a long time to gear civil servants up to getting things done. The Omega Project will short-circuit this by giving the government a comprehensive range of policy objectives and the means to achieve them'. Some new legislation would be required, but the Institute also hopes to exploit existing legislation through orders in council and ministerial circulars.

Of the 20 working parties that have been involved, the Defence working party report is nearing completion. The chairman is John Wilkinson, former PPS to John Nott, and joint secretary of the Conservative Defence Committee in the last parliament. A fellow member of the Omega working party is Julian Lewis, the director of the Coalition for Peace through Security. Their proposals are said to include the halving of staffing levels of the British Army on the Rhine (BAOR), and its replacement with a rapid deployment force – which could also be used in other areas.

Another early report will come from the Local Government working party, chaired by one of the Institute's own protégés, Michael Forsyth, who is generally considered to be one of the brighter of the Tory wild boys. The report is expected to contain some of Omega's most extreme proposals, ranging from the privatisation of all local government services to the increasing use of voluntary organisations in the social services. Forsyth himself says: 'Our report goes beyond the Conservative manifesto. We want privatisation to include all services, including professional ones such as architects and surveyors. We also want to involve more voluntary organisations and groups in local services. The volunteers will be fully trained – the only difference will be that they will not be paid'.

Forsyth, well-trained in the Adam Smith Institute's techniques of secrecy, is unwilling to give details of the proposals. But a progress report from the Transport working party gives an idea of the kind of thing a minister can expect to read in October.

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Derek Fowler

UPP

The Times

The Adam Smith Institute was set up by university colleagues Madsen Pirie and Eamon Butler (above right and left respectively). Its policy on Defence is being worked out by John Wilkinson MP (top left) and Julian Lewis (top right). Two new MPs, Michael Forsyth (below left) and Chris Chope (below right), are protégés.

UPP

Derek Fowler

'The prohibition on taxi-sharing should be abolished', it announces, 'as should fare and price controls'. It goes on to explain the intricate delights of 'electronic metering' in private cars as a means of raising extra revenue to pay back private companies for building roads. The report also proposes replacing the present Passenger Transport Executives with 'conurbation transport authorities', which 'should be given the function of dismantling the public operator services and easing the move to total privatisation'. For the railways, there is a simple solution: the privatisation of the Victoria to Brighton line, leading to the 'wholesale privatisation of British Rail, with individual lines or groups of lines sold off to the highest bidder'.

More ideas for privatisation come from the Housing working party, chaired by Robert Jones, the new MP for Hemel Hempstead and another keen graduate of St Andrew's University. His group's proposals include the privatisation of local government plans, deregulation of the Rent Act in parts of the country, and putting the sale of council houses in private hands if a local authority is proving unco-operative.

Some of these ideas echo those of Jones's pamphlet published by the Institute in 1982. Jones, a member of the Federation of Civil Engineering Contractors said: 'There is no doubt at all that the removal of most of the planning restrictions and controls which are applied in Britain would bring major and lasting benefit to the community'.

But will anyone actually listen to this flood of ideas? The Institute declares the Omega Project to be 'the largest and most comprehensive review of government undertaken, and it promises to be a major influence on policy in the future'. The Institute has been described as 'second division' by some leading thinkers of the Right, but many agree that it is clambering up the ladder of influence. Rhodes Boyson is sympathetic to the Institute and Norman Fowler has spoken at one of its conferences – and was made its 'man of the year' after his proposals for privatisation.

Michael Portillo, formerly special adviser to David Howell and now working for Cecil Parkinson, is on the Omega Energy working party. The Omega groups also include prominent journalists such as Russell Lewis of the *Daily Mail* and Ivan Fallon, City Editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*. An Adam Smith Institute council member working on the project is T. E. Utley, a leader writer on the *Daily Telegraph* and a close friend of Mrs Thatcher. Among the MPs who sit on the working parties are Sir John Biggs-Davison, Nicholas Budgen, Peter Lilley, Warren Hawksley, Sir William Clark and James Pawsey.

Mrs Thatcher and her ministers know about the Omega Project, and are expecting its delivery in the autumn. But the true worth of Dr Pirie and colleagues will not be accepted until then – until they have proved themselves to be the dryest of the dry. One informed onlooker, himself by no means wet, says with a hint of distaste in his voice: 'If they succeed, then you'll know what the Reformation really means'. □

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UNIONS

Block vote blues

Francis Beckett defends different forms of democracy

LABOUR'S LEADERSHIP election has focused a sharp spotlight on the pantomime villain of labour movement politics – the trade union block vote. Critics maintain that the big unions' block votes stifle debate and democracy in the Labour Party and the TUC and swamp the influence of the constituency parties. They argue that the votes of hundreds of thousands of workers are cast without consultation.

Its practitioners do not always enhance its reputation. At the last TUC General Council meeting, unkind words were directed at Fire Brigades Union chief Ken Cameron, who affiliates fewer members than he has, and at Bill Sirs, whose Iron and Steel Trades Confederation is affiliated on the basis of having more members than the entire steel industry now employs. Unchecked, such things will get worse. The new system of allocating automatic General Council seats for unions with high membership will increase the temptation to overstate numbers; the growing impoverishment of other unions will induce them to understate to save money.

Major block voters, like Moss Evans and David Basnett, and noisy ones, like Clive Jenkins, seem to give little thought to the block vote's image. What they do with it is usually above board. But they manage to look like 16th century cardinals, whispering ostentatiously in smoke-filled vestibules, and occasionally putting out the wrong colour smoke by mistake. Clive Jenkins's casual 'dismissal' of Michael Foot as party leader, and *ex cathedra* 'pronouncement' of Neil Kinnock will not have helped.

Both leading Labour leadership contenders have expressed views on the block vote. As over other matters, the media are trying to invent an unresolvable gulf between Kinnock and Hattersley which does not exist. Hattersley is certainly sticking to his 1980 line in favour of individual membership ballots. But even he says: 'I do not believe that a general rule can be imposed to make (ballots) compulsory, for I am no more in favour of the Labour Party National Executive rewriting the trade union rule books than I am of allowing Norman Tebbit the same privilege.'

The unions meanwhile have generally, despite what the media says, been making an honest attempt to do the job democratically. The only major union so far to declare for Hattersley, the engineering section of the AUEW, did it by decision of its executive. Hattersley, to his credit, took the first public opportunity to repeat in front of the union's leaders his view about ballots. The AUEW(E) points out that executive members are elected by individual ballot and represent the members.

The TGWU, as usual, will come in for most criticism because its block vote is the biggest. But an individual member ballot was out of the question on cost grounds alone. And finding out where 1¾ million members live with no central records, and mailing them all, would have monopolised the entire bureaucratic resources of Transport House – and mistakes would still have been made. When the farmworkers union balloted last year on its merger with the TGWU, it took six months to prepare the list of those entitled to vote.

And do you ballot everyone, letting members of any political party, conceivably including the National Front, have a say in electing the next Labour leader? Or do you ballot only Labour Party members, or only political levy payers? (They are not necessarily the same.) For a diffuse union like the TGWU, that course would have been lined with administrative potholes, any one of which would have made the process morally, and perhaps legally, indefensible.

So they stumbled into what was probably the most democratic solution available and 1,200 conference delegates endorsed the executive's recommendation to go for Kinnock.

Individual Labour leadership ballots are being conducted by the communication workers (UCW), NGA, the seamen (NUS), NUPE and APEX. It is unlikely that many more could do so and make it a noticeably democratic exercise.

The railwaymen (NUR) probably could, but they have chosen to make the choice at their annual conference. The battle, by individual ballot, for the single seat allocated to each of the 73 regions at the two-week conference is intense. Delegates stand year after year and see election as an honour. So they are careful to do what the electorate wants. They have delayed their Labour leadership decision so as to give time for as many branch nominations in as possible. Branch ballots are being used by FBU, COHSE, ASTMS, USDAW, NUM and GMBATU.

IS THERE A SPECIAL merit that resides in individual ballots, and is absent in branch ballots, conference or executive decisions?

Or is the real imprimatur of democracy stamped on branch ballots? Participatory democracy is perfectly respectable. Tony Benn advocated it when he ran for deputy leader and some of his parliamentary supporters wrote very rude letters indeed to General Secretaries whose unions voted for John Silkin on executive decisions. Whither democracy? they asked.

Or does the real truth lie with representative democracy – TGWU and NUR conferences, AUEW(E)'s executive? Decision makers were all elected by rank-and-file members and will have to answer for their votes, just like MPs.

The brighter the spotlight on the block vote, the more people are likely to try to kidnap the word 'democracy'. It's a linguistic game the Labour movement is getting good at. Norman Tebbit enjoys watching us play it and cannot resist the temptation to join in, because if you are saying that the system adopted by (say) NUPE is the only truly democratic one, you must be saying that the system adopted by (say) the TGWU is undemocratic. And if the TGWU is undemocratic, what a good thing Mr Tebbit is nearby to put matters right.

The critics of each system are right. One member-one vote *is* open to press manipulation. Branch ballots *do* disenfranchise those who cannot get to branch meetings. Union conferences and executives *can* grow away from the membership. Which is the least of the evils? It varies from union to union. So their methods will vary. And so they should.

No method will make the block vote 'popular'. Illogically but understandably, small unions, constituency Labour parties and television audiences resent seeing a union leader hold up a card with a six or even seven figure number on it.

So should the battered old block vote's friends take it aside and suggest the time has come to retire? In 1955, Norwood CLP suggested proportional representation within delegations. But in industrial matters, unions insist on majority decisions binding minorities for the very good reason that their industrial strength depends on it. They do not want to be seen acting differently at conferences.

So the block vote will have to soldier on. In 1978 Stan Orme, now shadow industry spokesman, suggested in a Tribune pamphlet that big unions might voluntarily restrict the size of their vote to take the sting out of the resentment it creates. He intends to refine his proposals in time for the September conference season. These might reduce the load of abuse that the block vote has to put up with, but they will not take it away entirely. Its only real comfort are the words Clement Attlee once used in its defence, truer today than ever: 'Those who make the loudest song about the block vote are significantly silent when it happens to be cast with their own views'. □

THIS ENGLAND

£3 book tokens for entries printed (on postcards, please).

☐ Letting off rooms has enabled her to maintain her independence, and, if she has any nostalgia for the expansive years she spent on her husband's tea plantation in India, she hides it well. 'I only regret that I gave the dhobi-wallah such hell. Poor fellow, now I understand what he went through.' – *Sunday Times Colour Magazine* (G. Moor)

☐ As more aware readers will have worked out for themselves, next year is 1984. According to the book of the same name, all manner of unpleasant things are supposed to be going on . . . thought police, Big Brother, newspeak and all that. But it's not all bad. One thing Orwell forgot to mention about next year is that it's the centenary of Worcester's Ombersley Road Methodist Church.– *Worcester Evening News* (D. Porter)

☐ The Queen has appointed Robert Cecil, son of Viscount Cranborne and grandson of the Marquess of Salisbury, to be a page, replacing James Bassett who has reached the retiring age of 16 and a half. – *The Times* (E. Kemp)

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TEN SUCCESSFUEL YEARS...

The Annual Report and Accounts of the British Gas Corporation, published on July 26th, covers the tenth complete financial year since the Corporation came into being on January 1st, 1973.

During a decade which saw two international oil crises and far-reaching changes in the pattern of Britain's energy production and consumption, gas has made a vast and increasing contribution to the nation's energy needs and economic well-being.

GROWING SHARE OF ENERGY MARKET

Gas sales are almost 50 per cent higher than they were at the start of the decade, and gas now supplies over 40 per cent of all the heat used in Britain (excluding fuel used for transport). Over 2 million more households have gas now compared with ten years ago; more than half of all domestic gas customers now have central heating; and the fact that the gas share of the domestic fuel market is now over 56 per cent is evidence of a major advance in the standards of comfort enjoyed by British people generally in their homes. In the industrial and commercial markets, too, the popularity of gas has increased –roughly a third of all the heat used by industry and business is now supplied by gas.

INVESTMENT AND EXPLORATION–AND BENEFITS FOR BRITISH INDUSTRY

The massive investment required to meet the growing demand for gas is entirely self-financed. Some £4,000 million will be spent over the next five years – providing much-needed business for British firms, and creating many thousands of jobs. This year, the gas people are mounting an ambitious exploration programme, with five separate drilling rigs in operation – and every confidence that new discoveries will be made.

The biggest single gas project is the development of the Morecambe Bay gas field off the Lancashire coast. Capital investment of £525 million to March 31 represents about half of what is needed to develop the field, and over 80 per cent of this huge sum has gone on contracts with British firms.

PROFITS FOR BRITAIN

British Gas made a current cost operating profit of £663 million in 1982/3, and the Corporation has exceeded the minimum financial target set by the Government. It also bettered the performance target agreed with the Government by reducing its net trading costs in real terms.

Much of the profit will be ploughed back into the business and thus ensure customers' gas supplies and services into the future. But a considerable sum is set aside to pay Corporation Tax and, with the cost of the gas levy and other taxes, payments to the Treasury totalled £667 million in the last financial year.

THE FUTURE

The most important benefit that British Gas activities bring is the provision of reliable, efficient, environmentally acceptable and competitively-priced energy supplies.

The gas people's investment, research and exploration programmes will help to ensure the continued availability of clean, controllable gas far into the future–for the good not only of customers, but of the nation as a whole.

	1973/74	1982/83	
Sales of gas (million therms)	11,487	16,463	+ 4,976
Number of customers	13,532,000	15,821,000	+ 2,289,000
Number of employees	103,400	103,300	– 100
Therms sold per employee	111,100	159,400	+ 48,300
Customers per employee	131	153	+ 22

...FROM THE GAS PEOPLE

BRITISH GAS

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NUTRITION

Feeding for the future

Hannah Wright criticises commercial baby foods and suggests some simple alternatives

AS SOON AS A BABY is born, something funny happens to its mother's intelligence. Love, anger and anxiety rule the mind, distorting information received from the senses. A hunger cry becomes a scream of pain; sound sleep, a cot death. This insecurity means that new parents just long to be told what to do. They apply the holy writ of Dr Spock, or the Cow and Gate booklet, with a disregard for the reasonable that borders on superstition.

Mothers also feel a profound urge to satisfy their baby's hunger and are very upset by failure (and a good thing too, or we'd be extinct); but put these two together – the anxious longing for certainty in baby care and the need to feed successfully – and you have carte blanche for the baby food manufacturers to produce foods which the baby will like immediately, regardless of its future development.

It is therefore a credit to the companies and to the paediatricians and dieticians who have pressured them over the years that such relatively good baby foods are produced. Not nearly as good as they should or could be, but less adulterated than other very processed foods and a great deal pleasanter than the special foods made for the weak and dependent at the other end of life.

It is very difficult to find out exactly what a baby should eat and drink for maximum health. The closest we get to a full assessment of baby development is the massive Child Health and Education Study run by Professor Neville Butler at Bristol. The progress of three lots of 15,000 babies, 12 years apart in age, has been followed up in detail. In each study, partly or wholly breast-fed babies (all extraneous factors allowed for) show slightly but significantly better performance at all levels than those who are entirely bottle-fed.

Alas, Professor Butler had no information about what types of solid food produced the best performers. What we have instead is a gradual refinement of the recommended daily intake tables based on what has seemed to work best over the years. As with adults, the energy (calorie) level is determined solely by what British babies ate in the year or two before the tables were published. Since British babies are rather fat, an excessive calorie recommendation is set out in the tables, translated into foods 'meeting recommended energy levels' by the manufacturers, thus promoting another generation of overweight babies. Not that fat babies become fat children (only about one in five do that) but most fat adults were fat babies, and setting up a bulgy middle age for one's child is to be avoided.

SINCE SALT HAS more or less disappeared from commercial baby foods, it is their sugar content which most worries health professionals, especially the rusks and syrups. Farley's rusks contain 31 per cent sugar and the vaunted low-sugar Oster Rusk, made by the same company, 18 per cent. Cow and Gate Lyga Rusks contain 26 per cent sugar, while Milupa's fruit, breakfast and even 'savoury' rusks all contain 17 per cent sugar. The only sugar-free rusk is made by the old fashioned Aberdeen firm of Bickiepeg. Delrosa and Optrose (rose hip syrups), Baby Ribena and Cow and Gate Blackcurrant Syrup and Orange Juice all contain massive amounts of sugar or glucose. Robinson's baby juices are sugar-free, as are most ordinary fruit juices. There is nothing special about baby juice except quite unnecessary amounts of Vitamin C – besides which, dull as it may seem, most babies like plain boiled water or still mineral water.

Syrupy drinks throughout the day, along with the chewing of sweet rusks (supposedly sold to *help* the teeth) or biscuits, turn delicate new teeth into rotten stumps. Even if sweet snacks are avoided, it is tempting to offer the baby too many meals of sweet, smooth cereal and dessert mixtures which get eaten without protest and are relatively cheaper than savoury baby foods. Pat Atkinson, a Greenwich health visitor, is concerned by the number of corner shops which stock only sweet varieties of baby foods, chocolate flavour being especially popular. The more disorganised mother who buys her baby foods regularly at such shops only has a choice of sweet foods. The more difficult the mother's circumstances, the more likely the baby is to be left eating just one or two sweet foods – which, besides being a powerful brainwashing in favour of a sweet and unvarying diet, can lead to deficiency disease. A study in 1978 found that infants were given an average of 4.3 intakes of sugar each day and that over one third of mothers admitted adding sugar to bottle feeds. Dorothy Francis, chief dietician at Great Ormond Street Hospital, confirms that healthy babies need no sugar except that found naturally in foods.

Baby food companies tend to capitalise on new mothers' lack of confidence by promoting themselves as the professionals in relation to amateur mum. Feelings of inadequacy can be increased by the habit in most baby clinics of handing out free samples of baby food. 'This,' says Jean Rowe of the Radical Health Visitors' Group, 'means not only that health visitors are acting as the unpaid agents of commercial companies, but also that the NHS appears to be endorsing the product. Mothers believe that there is something magical about a bought baby food to the point of asking if it is all right to use their own foods.'

A few dieticians, in their fury at the heavy promotion of commercial baby food, give the impression that any parent in any circumstances can do better. This is obviously untrue. While fresh foods, carefully prepared at home, can be much better, commercial baby foods are prepared to be attractive and digestible and are often fortified with extra vitamins and minerals. Therefore, while they can do damage in the long run, they are unlikely to kill. Home made foods prepared in ignorance and bad circumstances just might.

THE TROUBLE WITH IGNORANCE is that, by definition, it cannot recognise itself. And the greater the ignorance, the greater the enslavement to narrow belief or opinion. An Anglo-Saxon mother will tend to feed her child too much sweet and starchy stuff ending up with a fat, black-toothed infant. A Bangladeshi mother may miss out on foods containing Vitamins A, D and calcium, and her baby will get rickets. The Rastafarian mother may feed a strict vegetarian diet without due care, leading to iron deficiency anaemia. Dorothy Francis says that rickets and iron deficiency anaemia are the diseases of malnutrition that she encounters most frequently. Kate Start, senior dietician at Guy's Hospital, is most worried about obesity and dental caries. In all these cases, the dietician must try to change and improve something as fundamental to identify as eating habits, without damaging the family's cultural self-respect – which is where fortified foods and supplements, though not the best solution, come in very handy.

Obviously, privileged parents in these or any cultures are less likely to make such mistakes, but the overanxiety which is common over the feeding of a first baby does die out as the baby becomes a toddler and other children arrive.

Then, there occurs an opposite tendency, for the old family eating habits to be carried on regardless of suitability for young children (or, indeed, for adults). It is easy to slip into 'line of least resistance' feeding and there are some points which it is important to bear in mind when cooking for babies at home.

Salt should not be given to babies under six months, because their kidneys are too undeveloped to get rid of it properly. After this, food can be lightly salted, but it isn't necessary or particularly liked. Vegetarian babies must be given iron-rich foods as a priority, since their own supply begins to run down after six months of age and no plant source provides iron that is as well absorbed as that in meat. In spite of the baby food companies' references to protein contents, babies that get regular milk feeds

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of some kind are unlikely to need other first-class protein foods until they are a year or so old. Meat (especially liver), fish and eggs are useful, because they have good levels of iron, zinc and other essential minerals.

All commercial baby foods are made with refined flour and sugar. Some very little babies may have trouble with mineral absorption from whole grains, but, from seven months on, whole-grain breads and cereals have many advantages. Like adults, healthy babies do well on a diet of whole foods: fresh and dried fruit (good source of iron); vegetables (especially green and salad types); whole-grain cereals and breads (not too much); low fat milk products.

THIS TYPE OF DIET has several advantages over the refined, sugary, fatty and very cooked diets commonly eaten. Meals can be quick to prepare – which is not only vital when the infant is crimson with hunger and your mind, mesmerised by the screams, becomes slow and stupid, but equally important when the meal is summarily rejected.

But perhaps the greatest advantage to the parent, besides a pink-cheeked, not too bulgy baby, lies at the other end of the alimentary canal. A diet low in fat and fairly high in fibre (although bran *should not be given* in any form to a child under two) will, once the baby is on three meals a day, produce neat little turds ejected with ease and only a slight pong.

This kind of diet, however, does take careful shopping, so that fruits and vegetables are neither acidic nor over-ripe (they also need to be washed very thoroughly). If the family is under strain, or the baby very fussy about texture, compromises can be worked out using a base of powdered baby food and adding your grated fresh vegetable or fruit. (In any case, it is handy to keep a couple of packets in store for emergencies.)

In the end, a relaxed attitude is more important than anything. It is probably less damaging to feed intelligently-chosen baby foods with a glad heart than a home-made meal, however carefully prepared, with despair at one end of the spoon and mutiny at the other.

Very quick baby meals:

Cereal and Bread

Grind some good quality sugar-free muesli containing dried fruit and nuts to a fine meal in a food processor or stout blender. Keep it in the fridge for freshness and cook a spoonful at a time in two or three times its volume of water until thick (about two minutes).

Mix Weetabix (or similar) to a paste with boiling water; add grated fruit yogurt, etc.

Cut tiny wholemeal sandwiches very thin, with a smooth nut butter, liver or fish paste filling; but no butter.

Fruit

Finely grated (scraped with a spoon for first tastes) sweet apple or pear; banana mashed, or in little pieces; sweet orange in little pieces with tough membranes removed; seedless grapes sieved or cut in half; any sieved soft fruit.

Keep a few prunes, apricots or raisins soaking in the fridge in a little water and add one to yogurt or cereal. Renew every couple of days.

Milk Products

Low fat yogurt (plain), low fat curd cheese (quark), or cottage cheese mixed with fruit or juice or, if absolutely necessary, a tiny bit of sugar. Honey may contain the spores of botulism and is not recommended for babies under one year old.

Salad Meals

Avocado given on a spoon, or blended with a little milk and a crustless slice of wholemeal bread. The bread and milk base can also be blended with any of the following: a ripe cored tomato; a few parsley leaves; inside celery stalk and leaf; red or green pepper; lettuce and watercress leaves.

Further Reading

Health Education Council leaflets: *Starting your baby on solid food* and *Your Children's Teeth*.

Present Day Practices in Infant Feeding (DHSS Report No. 20 on Health and Social Subjects, published by HMSO).

Pocket Guide to Calories and Nutrition by Professor Arnold Bender, published by Mitchell Beazley at £3.95. □

ER, WELL, MARX, THERE ARE SEVERAL ROADS WE COULD TAKE....
THEN AS EVER, ENGELS, WE HAVE NOTHING TO CHOOSE BUT OUR LANES!
Martin Ronson '83

SCENES FROM THE LIVES OF THE GREAT SOCIALISTS: No.17 of the Series.
MARX & ENGELS GET HOPELESSLY LOST ON A RAMBLE.

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LABOUR PARTY

College questions

John Silkin calls for a radical change in Labour's electoral college system of choosing its leader

THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE itself was the result of three accidental factors. First, the desire of supporters of Tony Benn to create the machinery which would make him leader of the Party since they felt that the previous method of electing a leader – by the votes of the PLP alone – would prevent this outcome because he was not popular enough with his fellow MPs.

Second, the differences of opinion among trade union leaders as to what form an electoral college should take, if there were to be one at all, and the compromises which resulted in the unions having the largest say of all – i.e. 40 per cent.

Third, mandatory reselection of MPs. This, in theory, was going to give greater freedom for constituency parties and MPs to cast their votes as their consciences dictated. In fact, it has been used to put pressure on MPs, who with the prospect of reselection now need considerable courage to differ from the views of their General Committees.

It is one of the great ironies that Mr Benn, whom the electoral college concept was originally intended to benefit, is no longer an MP and, therefore, unable to take part this autumn. Were he to return to Parliament by means of a by-election he might well claim that he had not been able to contest the present election because of a technicality. We might then find another electorally damaging contested election – the third in a very short time.

As to the influence of the unions, the fear that they would dominate the election of Labour's leaders by exercising united power has not proved correct. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the danger of a few trade union leaders getting together to push a particular candidate has increased. Antagonism between union leaders and differences in philosophy between the various unions still, however, play their part in preventing elections from being a foregone conclusion.

The influence of the unions draws attention to the differing ways in which trade unions come to their decisions and to the influence, or lack of influence, of relatively small numbers of people within the unions. In the set-up as it exists today not only can those who do not belong to the Labour Party exercise decisive votes in support of one candidate or the other, but those who exercise such influence may not even be entitled to vote in a British election. For example, there are trade unions who have branches in the Republic of Ireland whose members are, of course, citizens of a foreign power.

To correct these anomalies it has been suggested that the doctrine of one member-one vote is the correct solution. There is much to be said for the proposition when it comes to the reselection of an MP, provided all who have a vote listen to all the candidates and the SDP system of postal ballots is not used. In a constituency a comparatively small number of people are involved, all of whom would have a chance of knowing the MP in question.

One member-one vote is much more difficult to justify when applied to the trade unions. It automatically assists candidates who concentrate their activities on television and other media channels and plays down the value of effective parliamentary contributions.

BUILDING UP support in the constituency parties is now a long-term project. There is an inbuilt advantage to any candidate who is a member of the party's National Executive Committee, since membership provides resources for the build-up of the campaign. NEC members can in the months if not years before the contest takes place, at the Labour Party's expense, travel around constituency after constituency making contacts and getting themselves generally known. Somebody without that financial privilege starts with a great disadvantage.

When I contested the deputy leadership election in 1981 I was refused any names and addresses of secretaries of constituency parties to assist me in seeking nominations. Even this year constituency Labour Party addresses ceased to be available on 20 June, so that unless candidates had built up a dossier of contacts before that date they would effectively be unable to begin a campaign within the constituency parties.

The additional factor is that any MPs seeking the leadership of the party are well advised to ignore Parliament and to attend as little as possible.

Instead, they should be spending their time going round the constituency parties, attending trade union annual conferences and regional conferences and conferences of pressure groups. They can largely ignore the votes of fellow MPs on the grounds that *their* constituency parties will put sufficient pressure on *them* when the time comes – the threat of deselection is a strong one.

Such a candidate, provided that he has built himself an organisation capable of obtaining finance, has a head start in any leadership campaign even before the previous leader has announced his intention of retiring.

I tried again and again during the 1981 deputy leadership contest to have the same limitation on expenses that exists in parliamentary elections. It is wrong that money without limit may be spent in support of any candidate and that there is not even a requirement to account from whom the money comes or how it is spent. The 1981 campaign demonstrated how such a campaign can be mounted.

Nobody should underestimate the costs involved in such an operation. Apart from rooms and hotels at all union conferences in order to tie up votes, there is the cost of printing and postage to the constituencies to try to get nominations and to keep in touch with them. There has to be a powerful telephone communication system and in 1981 – though we haven't yet seen a repeat of this in 1983 – badges and tee-shirts advertising one of the candidates were a conspicuous feature of the campaign.

ALL OF THIS is like an American presidential campaign. If it is to be a permanent feature of the election of Labour leaders we will have to accept the limitations to democracy that go with it. One day after President Carter had lost the American election, Mr Mondale had started his own campaign. It has been said that he rejoiced in two things. First, that he was not a Senator and, therefore, could ignore work in the Senate and, second, that he was rich enough to be able to meet the enormous cost.

A further limitation to the electoral college has vast constitutional implications. If money and absence from Parliament are to be the key factors in creating Labour's leaders the advantage will always lie with lack of parliamentary experience, lack of ministerial experience, opposition to the existing parliamentary leadership, and identification with outside groups, not all of them within the party. We are bound to wonder whether in a parliamentary democracy this will have quite the same appeal to voters as the old system of election by MPs.

An electoral college is bound to remain. But we have now seen it in action and we should analyse its weaknesses. We should also look at how foreign socialist parties operate and see whether there is anything we can learn from them.

There is always the danger that the electoral college could throw up a leader or deputy leader who, though in touch with the extra-parliamentary part of the movement – the constituencies, the unions and the affiliated organisations – may not necessarily be the best or indeed a good leader in Parliament. The German Socialist Party solves that problem by having a leader in the country and a leader of the Bundestag who, when the party wins, becomes Chancellor.

We should not be too proud to admit that some of the constitutional experiments the Labour Party has made during the past few years do not provide the answer the party expected. □

John Silkin MP is Opposition Spokesman on Defence & Disarmament.

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DIARY

Michael Leapman

It was gratifying to enjoy a bucolic day out near the centre of London and justify it by telling myself I was really doing research into local government spending. I'll explain. On Monday a group of council leaders met Whitehall ministers to complain about proposals in the Tory election manifesto to limit council spending. As it happened, only a day earlier I had been sampling one of my family's favourite council-sponsored events, the Lambeth Country Show at Brockwell Park near Brixton, being held for the tenth year running. The original idea derived from the assumption that many inner-city kids have never been exposed to sheep, cattle and such rustic phenomena. If they could not get to the country, the country would be brought to them. There's still quite a bit of that – heavily pregnant cows trying unsuccessfully to keep their dignity in the heat, newborn piglets believing they have entered a world made of canvas, full of staring human faces. But more and more it has developed into a craft and trade fair. Leatherworkers and potters display their skill and sell their wares, with dozens of charity stalls holding tombolas for bottles of Pomagne – a mysterious substance I have never seen except on such occasions. There are sheep-dog demos, a dog show, live music, hot-air ballooning and much else. I don't suppose it actually costs the council very much, to judge from the impressive list of sponsors in the programme. To take a random example, my son and I managed to carry off some of the prizes in the vegetable section of the flower show. (I was determined to get a mention of that in somehow.) When I noticed that it had been sponsored by Shell Petroleum I was able to pocket my £4.75 without feeling guilty about ripping off the ratepayers.

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So what's that got to do with spending cuts? Like much else in Lambeth, it all goes back to Ted Knight, leader of Labour's razor-thin council majority. No sooner was the election over than he launched a campaign against the proposed cuts. The main theme of a well-argued report he presented to the Labour group was that they should go all out to publicise the benefits that the citizens derived from the council's services. So I called in at the Lambeth Council tent at the Country Show to see how they were getting their message across. I must say, if I were Ted Knight I wouldn't have been too impressed. It was worthy but dreary, mainly photographic montages of a caring council in action, plus a cursory mock-up illustrating road-mending techniques and an inadequately explained exhibit on the dangers of asbestos. Moreover, it was surely a bad idea to include a prominent display in the centre of the tent to commemorate a visit by Lambeth dignitaries to Moskvoretsky, a Moscow suburb with which Lambeth used to be twinned and obviously wishes it still was. Although Moscow trippers seem to have paid their own way, those who didn't read all the print might have assumed it was done on council funds. All the same, I enjoyed the report of the group's visit to the magnificently named 'Rot Front Sweet Factory', as well as Ted Knight's comradely letter to his opposite number in Moskvoretsky, whom he addressed as 'Chairperson'. I wonder what the municipal Russian translators made of that?

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It's been a good summer for days out in London, certainly preferable to sweating it out in those jams the radio announcers tell us about with such relish. If we have Ted Knight to thank for the Lambeth Country Show, I suppose the good Ken Livingstone can take ultimate credit for London Transport's Open Day earlier this month at their Acton and Chiswick bus and tube depots. Easily the most popular attraction there was a hair-raising ride on a bus passing through the skid test area. There were long queues for the chance to be scared out of our wits as the wheels screeched and the top deck tipped at a sensational angle. Watching, it struck me that London Transport could keep their fares still fairer by turning one of their depots permanently into a theme park

on the American pattern. In Florida there are now dozens of them – Circus World, Sea World, Disney World, the EPCOT centre (it stands for Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow), all offering rides and exhibits based on a particular theme. Instead of a House of Horrors, LT World could include a simulation of being stuck in a broken-down tube with a party of schoolchildren en route to the Natural History Museum. And regular bus travellers would identify with the terrors of a roller-coaster where, at the very peak of the steepest incline, the driver ends his shift, gets out and finds his replacement has not shown up. For extra realism the bus behind, half empty, would sail past to the finish, the driver giving a cheery wave. While we're waiting for LT World, my local bus garage at Stockwell is holding an open day tomorrow (Sat). I'll be first in the queue.

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Finally, a study in objective journalism. This month saw the publication of my book about Rupert Murdoch and how he bought *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*. He gave me no help and clearly didn't approve of the project. Here are extracts from some of the reviews:

'An engrossing portrait.'

'Michael Leapman . . . has done us all a great service.'

'Packed with critical, disparaging and sometimes hilarious anecdotes.'

'This excellent book.'

'Full of fascinating gossip.'

'This entertaining and important essay on the mechanics of international capitalism.'

'Pointless anecdotes and occasional meaningless generalisations.'

'Mostly no more than a patchwork of unrelated conversations.'

'The book does not fulfil any need for the considered profile.'

Now guess which three of those quotations are from reviews in Murdoch's own papers. No prizes.

ROGER WODDIS

Just a little prick

The NHS is to be ordered by Norman Fowler, Social Services Secretary, to start sacking staff, including doctors, nurses, paramedics and ancillary workers.

Remember the words of our Leader
As she strolled on the October sands?
'You really have no need to worry,
The service is safe in our hands.'

It would have been churlish to doubt her,
Her eyes were so honestly blue,
But don't get your knives out for Norman
Who does what she pays him to do.

'This won't hurt at all,' said the Surgeon,
'Lie back and just try to relax.'
And smiling, he put down his scalpel
And picked up a bloody great axe.

There's far too much getting and spending,
The cost of the borrowing bill
Must fall to those able to bear it,
The old and the mentally ill.

Though no one's as caring as Norman,
The wind must be raised – but where from?
And please spare a thought for dear Nigel,
Whose targets could cost us a bomb.

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STATE OF THE UNION

The shadow of the Great Satan

Noam Chomsky on US imperialism, a foreign policy designed to serve the domestic interests of those who own and manage the US economy

IT IS DIFFICULT in history and social science to discover principles of any generality and force, but there are a few. One is that every action of every State is claimed to be undertaken solely for defensive purposes and with awesome nobility of intent – though the leadership may fall into error because of ignorance, the complexities of history, or the machinations of whoever happens to be the current 'Great Satan', to borrow Khomeini's useful contribution to contemporary political discourse. To establish this Truth, it is only necessary to turn to the published record. In the case of the US, we learn from it that under Carter 'human rights is replacing self-determination as the guiding value in American foreign policy' (Arthur Schlesinger); that we fall 'into foreign disasters like Vietnam mainly through an excess of righteousness and disinterested benevolence' (John K. Fairbank); that 'unlike the Soviet Union, the US does not want to convert anyone to a specific political, social, or economic system' (Walter Laqueur); that 'our policy is not rooted in any national material interest of the United States, as most foreign policies of other countries in the past have been' (Charles E. Bohlen); and so on, with much consistency. An investigation of the USSR (or other lesser powers) would reveal that the scope of this law of history is quite broad.

Other evidence suggests a somewhat different picture. We find that planning is generally rational in the short term and that its goals relate directly to the interests of those who own and manage the domestic economy and who employ state power to realise their interests (called 'the national interest') to the extent – generally large – that they can. In the early years of World War II, top State Department planners, along with the Council on Foreign Relations, developed the concept of a 'Grand Area' that would be subordinated to the needs of the American economy as part of 'an integrated policy to achieve military and economic supremacy for the United States within the non-German world' (later beyond). The domain 'strategically necessary for world control' was to include the Western hemisphere, the Far East and the former British Empire, to be dismantled in an exercise called, in American scholarship, 'anti-colonialism', but perceived as an effort 'to elbow us out' by British officials. Plans were outlined for particular areas and for a global economic order in which American interests would be paramount. These programmes met with considerable success, though by 1970 the US was no longer so clearly 'the hegemonic power in a system of world order', as a Trilateral Commission study observes.

One component of this system of world order was a regular pattern of intervention, taking various forms, to counter threats to US hegemony – as in Greece, Iran, Guatemala, Indochina, Cuba, the Congo, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Chile, El Salvador, among others. By the 1970s, it was recognised that the US would have to delegate responsibility to regional powers: the US must be 'concerned more with the overall framework of order than with the management of every regional enterprise' (Henry Kissinger). In the crucial Middle East area, where it was necessary to hold what the State Department described as 'the greatest material prize of world history', the role of local gendarme was assigned to Iran and Israel – then after the fall of the Shah, just Israel. In Africa, French forces 'keep West Africa safe for French, American and other foreign oilmen' (and others) as *Business Week* explained. In Central America, when the Congressional human rights programme blocked direct intervention, the task was assigned to Argentine neo-Nazis and to Israel, a willing and efficient ally that is able to perform such tasks as supplying a computerised system to monitor the use of water and electricity – so that the death squads can be sent in if too many people appear to be using a particular apartment. And so on. Laqueur is right in holding that the US cares little about the political systems in its dependencies – specifically, about democracy – but the social and economic systems were always a prime concern. In particular, these had to be 'open societies', meaning open to US economic penetration and political control. Where a society fails this test, it is subject to a range of penalties of a familiar sort.

Intervention often succeeded, including – to a degree that is often underestimated – in Indochina, where the perceived threat of successful social and economic development under a radical nationalist leadership was averted, probably for a long time. A crucial decision of 1961 converted the mission of the Latin American military from 'hemispheric defense' (against Martians?) to 'internal security' – that is, war against their own populations. The result was a plague of repression without precedent in the bloody history of the continent as National Security States were established with American support, directed by military officers 'indistinguishable from the war criminals hanged at Nuremburg after World War II' who 'passed through the Inter-American Defense College in Washington' and used 'the methods of Heinrich Himmler's extermination squads' (Charles Maechling, who led counter-insurgency and internal-defence planning for Kennedy and Johnson from 1961-66).

This was the most lasting contribution of the Kennedy liberals to Latin America. Their contribution to Indochina need not be discussed. They were impressed by its success in providing a 'shield' behind which Indonesia could re-enter the Free World, earning its credentials with the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of landless peasants and the creation of a 'paradise for investors', who were impeded only by the rapacity of the Indonesian military – 'a gleam of light in Asia', as James Reston wrote in the *New York Times* after the massacres. General Maxwell Taylor and others attributed these successes to US accomplishments in South Vietnam, while Secretary of Defense McNamara described them as a 'dividend' for the 'well-justified' US military aid to Indonesia in the Sukarno years, a story re-enacted in Chile with some new twists. The Human Rights Administration subsequently played its part by providing crucial diplomatic and military support for the near genocidal Indonesian invasion of East Timor, still in progress. Many other examples may be cited.

THE COMMITMENT of the US to human rights has occasionally been studied, for example by Latin Americanist Lars Schoultz, who found that 'aid has tended to flow disproportionately to Latin American governments which torture their citizens', to 'the hemisphere's relatively egregious violators of fundamental human rights'. In contrast, aid is uncorrelated with need. The correlation between aid and human rights violations, though clear, was understated in Schoultz's study: he does not consider what might be called 'the right to live' (for example, the right to food, work, medical care), which does not figure in US human rights legislation; and he omits various other forms of intervention such as 'making the economy scream' in Chile under Allende, directing aid from international lending institutions to one's favourite torturers. In some cases, as in Argentina, the US worked hand-in-hand with the USSR.

It is, of course, impossible to deduce a causal connection from a correlation. Thus it would be unfair to conclude that US planners positively enjoy torture and murder. Some insight into the meaning of the

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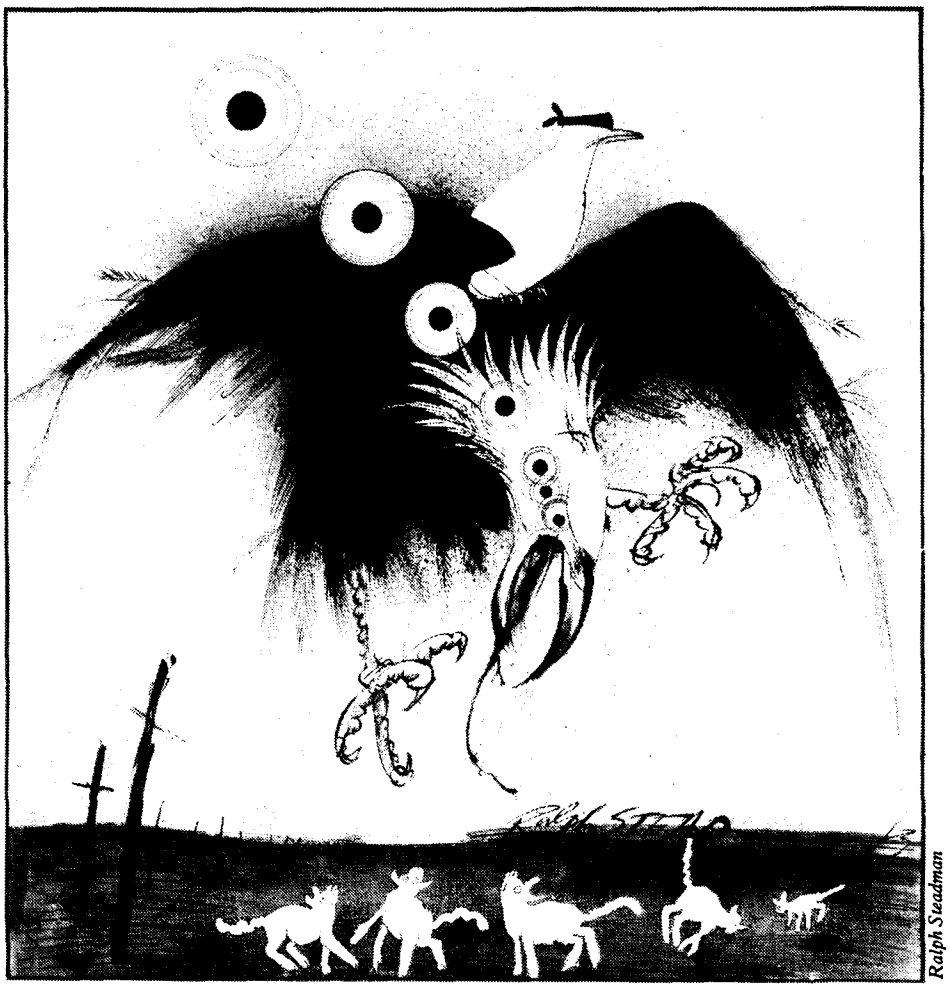

Ralph Steadman

correlation is given by a study of broader scope conducted by economist Edward S. Herman. He found the same aid-torture correlation, but also found that US aid was closely correlated to improvement in the investment climate. The explanation for the initial correlation now becomes clear. Given the nature of state power, aid naturally goes to those who show due concern for the climate for business operations, which tends to benefit from torture of dissidents, murder of union and peasant organisers, or priests working with the poor. Hence US support correlates with torture, death squads and degradation, as a consequence of the primary commitment of US foreign policy – human rights being as relevant a concern as democracy and self-determination, apart from the ideological institutions.

How does the present Reagan Administration policy fit into this long-term picture? The domestic programme of the Reagan Administration is designed to transfer resources from the poor to the wealthy and to revitalise the economy by State intervention. In the US this means expanding the state-guaranteed market for high technology waste (armaments), along with state subsidies for research and development. The new 'supercomputers', for example, will be subsidised by the Pentagon, the Department of Energy (heavily engaged in nuclear weapons research) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (which has a large responsibility for aircraft design). They will be the primary users, as in the case of the earlier history of the computer industry.

To convince the electorate to support a programme of this sort is hopeless, unless they are properly frightened. It comes as no surprise, then, that the Reagan Administration from its first moment has been seeking an international confrontation. Early efforts to construct a Soviet threat in El Salvador ran foul of an unexpected popular reaction – a residue of the 'Vietnam syndrome', a dread disease that afflicted much of the American population with such terrifying symptoms as insight into the nature of US foreign policy and distaste for oppression and massacre. Imaginative stories were devised about Libyan hit-men roaming Washington to ambush our leader, then a Libyan attack on the Sudan which offered the opportunity for the US to flex its muscles and put Gaddafi 'back in his box' (George Shultz). One aim of the remarkably well-publicised invasion of Nicaragua is presumably to induce the Sandinistas to call for Soviet or Cuban aid, so that the US can impose a blockade and, if lucky, achieve something like the Cuban missile crisis, when the 'best and the brightest' courageously faced a ½ to ⅓ probability of nuclear war to establish the principle that the US has the right to place missiles on the borders of the Soviet Union (obsolete missiles, for which a withdrawal order had already been given), though the Soviet Union does not have the equivalent right. (It is worth bearing in mind that this is generally regarded as 'perhaps the finest hour of John F. Kennedy's Presidency' (Graham Allison).)

Similar remarks hold for the Administration's latest 'success' in Lebanon. Shultz's negotiations pointedly excluded Syria, presenting it with a *fait accompli* that it would be sure to reject, so that Caspar Weinberger could issue a stern warning to the Great Satan and its 'proxies', who were blocking peace. No one would have expected Israel to withdraw unconditionally, if presented with a comparable Lebanese-Syrian agreement under the Russian aegis – putting aside here other questions such as the ratification of the right of aggression and massacre implicit in the terms of the Israel-Labanon accords. It would have been possible to bring Syria into the 'peace process', with an eye to realising the Syrian withdrawal scheduled for Summer 1982 and (aborted by the Israeli invasion), even to include the Soviet Union in accordance with the wishes of the Lebanese government. But the political capital would have been much reduced.

Meanwhile, vastly expanded war spending was motivated by a 'window of vulnerability' that has now gone the way of Kennedy's 'missile gap', concocted for similar purposes. There is every reason to expect continued sabre rattling, heightened intervention, and threats of war.

These are not novelties in post-war US history. The situation was similar in 1950, when a National Security Council study (NSC 68) called for a huge military expansion and a 'rollback' strategy against the USSR just before the Korean war; or 1961, when President Kennedy initiated a programme of massive rearmament, counter-insurgency and confrontation that resembles Reagan's programme today in many respects. Military build-ups have been unrelated to any new security threat, but closely correlated with domestic issues, including the perceived need for a stimulus for production and for intervention in the Third World to maintain 'open societies'. The Great Satan is always available in times of need and its own violence and brutality have regularly been exploited to justify programmes adopted for other ends. Here again, there is considerable symmetry in world affairs.

This system is a highly dangerous and unstable one. There is a serious threat of superpower confrontation in the Middle East and possibly Central America, not to speak of the consequences for the local populations. Advances in military technology vastly increase the likelihood that confrontation or even tension will explode into nuclear war. It is not easy to view the future with much optimism. □

Professor Chomsky is at the Department of Linguistics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The State of the Union

This article is the first in an occasional series about the way American society is developing under President Reagan. Next month: Michael Klare on US defence policy.

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LEBANON

Gathering storm

Alan George on the ingredients for a massacre

PRIME MINISTER Begin and his cabinet have decided to pull back their forces in western Lebanon. There is, though, little chance that Israel will try to disband the local Phalangist groups before it withdraws. The rightists will be left in a position to defy the Lebanese army, as it tries to take over, and the international peace-keeping force.

Rightist militias have intensified their campaign of murder and intimidation against Palestinian refugees in Israeli-occupied south Lebanon, aimed at forcing a mass exodus of the Palestinians. The new wave of terror, involving bombings, threats by masked gunmen, and random murders and abductions, has already led to the flight of at least 2,000 Palestinians from their homes in the past three months.

The main perpetrators are the 'Christian' Phalangists – allowed into the region by the Israelis after last summer's invasion – and the Guardians of the Cedars, another 'Christian' group. Both model themselves on European fascist parties of the 1930s, but the Guardians are far to the right even of the Phalangists. Both groups are allied with Israel, and both bitterly oppose the Palestinian presence in Lebanon.

The main focus of the current wave of terror has been the Sidon area, where some 55,000 Palestinians live in two refugee camps and in the town itself. After the invasion, Phalangists filtered south into the region from Beirut, while Major Sa'ad Haddad's Israeli-sponsored rightist militia was allowed to extend its operational area northwards into the town from its former enclave along the Israeli frontier.

Intimidation of Palestinians in the region began soon after the rightists' arrival. Since the Sabra-Shatila massacres, however, Israel has tried to restrain the militias, although it has had more success with Haddad's men than with the Phalangists, who have no tradition of dependence on Tel Aviv. Haddad's militia now functions as an auxiliary force of the Israeli army and its presence in Sidon is restricted to a few road checkpoints.

Since the Beirut massacres, Israel has tried to prevent the Phalangists from entering the refugee camps and the town, but these efforts have proved largely ineffective. Phalangist harassment of Palestinians has continued. In the first two months of this year at least 1,000 Palestinians were evicted from their homes in the eastern suburbs of Sidon. By late February there were real fears that new massacres of refugees were imminent. France, Italy, the EEC and the United States urged Israel to take preventive measures. In response, Israeli army patrols in the camps were increased and incidents of intimidation abated.

At the end of March, however, the Phalangists renewed their attacks, and these have since escalated sharply. Among the incidents have been:

25 March: Thirty-two families occupying buildings in the Rijal Arbayeen quarter of Sidon were threatened by masked gunmen after nightfall, and told to leave immediately. Some of the refugees were beaten up. Ten of the families moved to Nabatiyeh, in the south.

7 April: Armed men occupied empty apartments in a building opposite an UNRWA (United National Relief and Works Agency) warehouse, one kilometre east of Sidon. Palestinian tenants in other apartments were forced to leave. The same day the bullet-riddled body of a 47-year-old Palestinian engineering worker was found. He lived in a quarter of the town from which a number of Palestinian families had been terrorised into fleeing.

12 April: 150 Palestinian families in Sidon were ordered to quit by masked gunmen.

20 April: Handbills were distributed by the Guardians of the Cedars warning the Palestinians to leave Lebanon or face the consequences. That evening a 62-year-old Palestinian was shot.

24 April: Ten unarmed men told 100 refugee families to leave the Salem building, a squalid tenement block on Sidon's main street. In the night, an armed group arrived, and threatened to burn the building if the refugees did not leave. 75 of the families left at once. Most are now squatting in the Burj al Shamali Palestinian refugee camp near Tyre. The remaining 25 families stayed until 2 May, when gunmen gave a final warning. These families also went to Burj al Shamali.

3 May: Gunmen threatened Palestinian families in the Hillalieh and Abra quarters of Sidon, giving them 72 hours to quit. At least 35 families abandoned their homes and moved to the Bass and Rashidiyeh refugee camps near Tyre.

ISRAEL'S ATTITUDE to the harassment of Palestinians by Lebanese rightists is ambivalent. It does act to curb some of the excesses. Where eviction threats have been issued, for example, an Israeli army jeep is often sent to park outside the property for several hours. Israeli soldiers have also warned those making the threats. These measures, however, have not been enough to halt the evictions.

While reacting to individual incidents of intimidation, however, Israel allows the rightist groups to operate openly and maintains close official links with them. Early this year the leader of the Guardians of the Cedars, Etienne Saqr (code-named Abu Arz), held talks in Jerusalem with Menachem Begin. On 17 April, the Guardians held their eighth anniversary meeting in Ein Ebal, near Bint Jbeil, in the heart of Israeli-occupied Lebanon. Phalangist and Haddad representatives were present.

Under pressure from guerrilla attacks, Israel has for some time been contemplating a withdrawal of its occupation forces to more easily defensible lines. The Isreali positions would formally be handed over to UN, or other international peace-keeping troops in conjunction with the Lebanese army. The Phalangists in Sidon, however, would resent efforts to station international and Lebanese government forces in the town.

Israel will almost certainly pull back to the Awali River, which enters the Mediterranean just north of Sidon. If it sticks to the river line, the city will remain under an occupation which at least forces some restraint on the Phalangists. In villages along a ten mile stretch of the Sidon-Beirut coast road north of the Awali, however, live 5-7,000 Palestinian refugees, three quarters of them women and children, who would be left without such protection as the Israeli forces now provide. There is speculation, however, that Israel will include Sidon in the area to be evacuated, exposing the city's large Palestinian community to rightist terror, increasing the number of those exposed to another mass slaughter of innocents. □

ITALY

Red, White and Green

Seven million Italians are in co-ops. John Earle reports

Rome

IN THIS COUNTRY there is no shrine like Toad Lane in Rochdale, where the inscription in the museum proudly commemorates the Equitable Pioneers who started trading in December 1844 and 'thereby launched the worldwide co-operative movement'. But today Italian co-operatives make a wider impact on their national economy than their British counterparts. They certainly see an increasing role for themselves in the future. Evidence of their vitality is provided by 400 applications from industrial firms to convert from capitalism to co-operation.

Article 45 of the Italian Constitution says: 'The Republic recognises the social function of co-operation,' whose growth is to be promoted through suitable legislation. Article 46 goes on to say the Republic 'recognises the right of workers to collaborate, in the manner and limit laid down by the law, in the management of firms'.

The government register lists no fewer than 136,484 co-operatives in sectors such as retailing, industry, agriculture, housing, transport, fishing, banking and other services. But many of these carry little weight, and some exist only on paper. Those that matter number about 40,000.

They do not form a united movement, but

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are split along political lines into three main groups or 'centrals'. The 15,006 co-ops in the *Lega* consist of Communists, Socialists and some Republicans (the 'reds'). The president is Onelio Prandini, a 46-year-old Communist ex-worker from Modena, and the vice-president is Umberto Dragone, a Socialist from Milan. The Catholic-inspired *Confederazione* (the 'whites') is roughly of equal weight – its 21,577 co-ops are more numerous but less strong economically – and is headed by Dario Mengozzi, 53, until recently the provincial chief in Modena. The much smaller *Associazione* (the 'greens') groups 4,243 co-ops of Republican and Social Democrat orientation under Renato Ascari Racagni, a former Republican member of parliament.

Together these colours make up the national flag, and together these three centrals collaborate on major national issues. With about seven million members, their combined turnover exceeds 30,000 billion lire (£13.5 billion), which is one and a half times that of the Fiat group and about 7 per cent of Italy's gross domestic product.

For over a year they, like the capitalist-run firms in both the private and the big public sectors, have been facing a severe recession, which shows no signs of ending. Inflation remains above 16 per cent, industrial production has fallen by 8 per cent in 12 months (that of steel by 25 per cent), unemployment is estimated at more than 2.5 million out of a 22.7 million workforce.

How has the movement been faring? The *Lega*, on the whole, has stood up well, thanks to the feeling that binds a community of co-owners together in times of difficulty. The *Associazione* has been keeping a low profile. But the image of the *Confederazione* has suffered. This is mainly because of the failure of Fincoop Lombarda, its Milan-based financial holding company, with a deficiency of 60 billion lire (£27 million). The affair may bring further financial repercussions; it has already brought the resignation of Enzo Badioli, the *Confederazione*'s 62-year-old president. A former militant in Catholic Action and in the Christian Democrat party, Badioli was already a somewhat controversial figure, having been listed as member number 1743 of Licio Gelli's secret and now banned P2 masonic lodge, though Badioli himself denied joining. He has been replaced by Mengozzi but remains head of the *Confederazione*'s powerful network of rural savings banks.

PERSONALITIES apart, the *Confederazione* is by its nature more vulnerable in an economic crisis. Its Catholic emphasis on the value of the individual encourages more numerous but less tightly knit co-ops with fewer members than the *Lega*. The *Confederazione* has 21,500 co-ops against the *Lega*'s 15,000, although both have about three million members altogether.

The *Lega* has also had its difficulties, particularly among co-ops in farming, food processing, building, and transportation and removals. But 'on the whole, the trend of expansion has continued,' to quote a policy document prepared for the *Lega*'s national directorate. Last year's results were better than those of 1981 in agri-business, stock-raising, tourism, collective catering, and in distribution, both wholesale and retail.

The *Lega's* policy during the recession has, in the words of the document, been directed towards 'the restructuring and development of our own system of concerns and the fostering of new co-operation'. This has brought a process of rationalisation, of merging weak co-ops to form bigger and stronger ones. The industrial and public works sector's 1,350 workers' co-ops numbered more than 2,000 two years ago. 'We've strengthened ourselves in the crisis,' Aldo Bonistalli, head of Lega's industrial sector, said, 'but we've had to have our wits about us.'

A SIGNIFICANT feature in recent years has been the emergence of 'super-co-ops', capable of challenging leading private companies. Co-operativa Muratori e Cementisti (CMC) of Ravenna, whose annual turnover tops 250 billion lire (£110 million), has a young management team in their 30s and 40s used to competing – and sometimes collaborating in joint ventures – with their capitalist counterparts, and has won public works contracts in third world countries like Algeria, Iran, Somalia and Mozambique.

Despite their differing political orientations, the three centrals work together in promoting new co-operatives. For example, among significant formations in the last two years, NUI of Genoa (drill-heads) belongs to the *Lega* alone, but three others – Zetronic of Padua (electronic components), Richard Ginori of Leghorn (isolating equipment for electric power transmission) and Reguitti of Florence (garden furniture) – were set up jointly by the three centrals.

For most of the 400 new applications, the feasibility studies which are always drawn up will go to all three. Many requests will be turned down. Bonistalli, a Communist, is as opposed as anyone to agreeing automatically to a workforce's desire to form a co-op as a last-ditch alternative to closure. In any case, he says, a radical shake-up is usually necessary, because under former management inefficient or erroneous ways have crept in which need correcting. But the concern itself must be potentially sound.

'If an enterprise can't pay its way, its social desirability matters little,' he said. For there's no future if a member puts up 10 million lire (about £4,500) of savings, only to see it eaten away by inflation and losses.

Shortage of capital is a common problem for co-ops everywhere. The outlook, however, is improving. A bill to improve facilities for government-backed loans to co-ops is now in abeyance due to the dissolution of parliament, but the three centrals will keep pressure on the new parliament for new and better legislation.

The *Lega* is also looking towards the European Community. Bonistalli is vice-president of CECOP, the body linking Community co-operative movements, which is lobbying for the establishment of an EEC Fund for Co-operation. The Italians are keen members of the EEC, and believe it would be a serious mistake if progress towards Europe at the level of the worker were endangered by a Labour-inspired British withdrawal. They see the spirit of Rochdale as still having relevance beyond the bounds of Britain. □

Israeli weapons claims exposed

Washington

CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS from the US Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) have exposed major deceptions by Israel about the war in Lebanon and the supply of US arms to Israel.

Contrary to the almost universal belief that Israel had no losses in the air during the Lebanon War, DIA reveals that Israel 'lost 3 jet aircraft and at least 16 more were damaged'. DIA also estimates 'that Israel had 125-150 tanks and 150-175 armoured personnel carriers damaged or destroyed. An estimated 40 tanks and 75 armoured personnel carriers are judged unrepairable'.

Israel has claimed the Lebanon campaign has not resulted in any increase in financial aid requested from the US. The classified US documents estimate that 'the increase of at least $50 million in Israel's request for (US) foreign military sales reflects, at least in part, aid for the replenishment of ammunition stocks drawn down and tanks lost during the fighting in Lebanon'. The cost of replacing and repairing the jet aircraft and tanks is at least $140-170 million.

US intelligence reveals that Israel has received considerably more US weapons than previously admitted. For this reason (and because US officials consider Israeli assessments of the Arab threat highly exaggerated) US military officers oppose in private the increase of US military grants that Israel is requesting for the 1984 and 1985 budgets.

Claudia Wright

US weapons in Israel

Weapon	DIA totals	Previously published totals	% over previously published figure
Tanks			
– **Total***	3,680	3,600	+2
– **M60s**	1,406	1,135	+24
Armoured personnel carriers	5,719	4,800	+19
Howitzers – self-propelled, 155mm, 175mm**	537	380	+41
First-line combat aircraft	665	574	+16
Improved-Hawk anti-aircraft missiles	895	440	+103
Chaparral anti-aircraft missiles	912	200	+356

** Includes tanks of non-US manufacture. DIA estimates that Israeli forces captured about 290 Soviet tanks and 216 armoured vehicles in Lebanon. DIA reports that Israel has already sold some of this equipment to Romania.*

*** DIA says Israel plans on a total of 792 howitzers of these types and implies advance approval by the Pentagon.*

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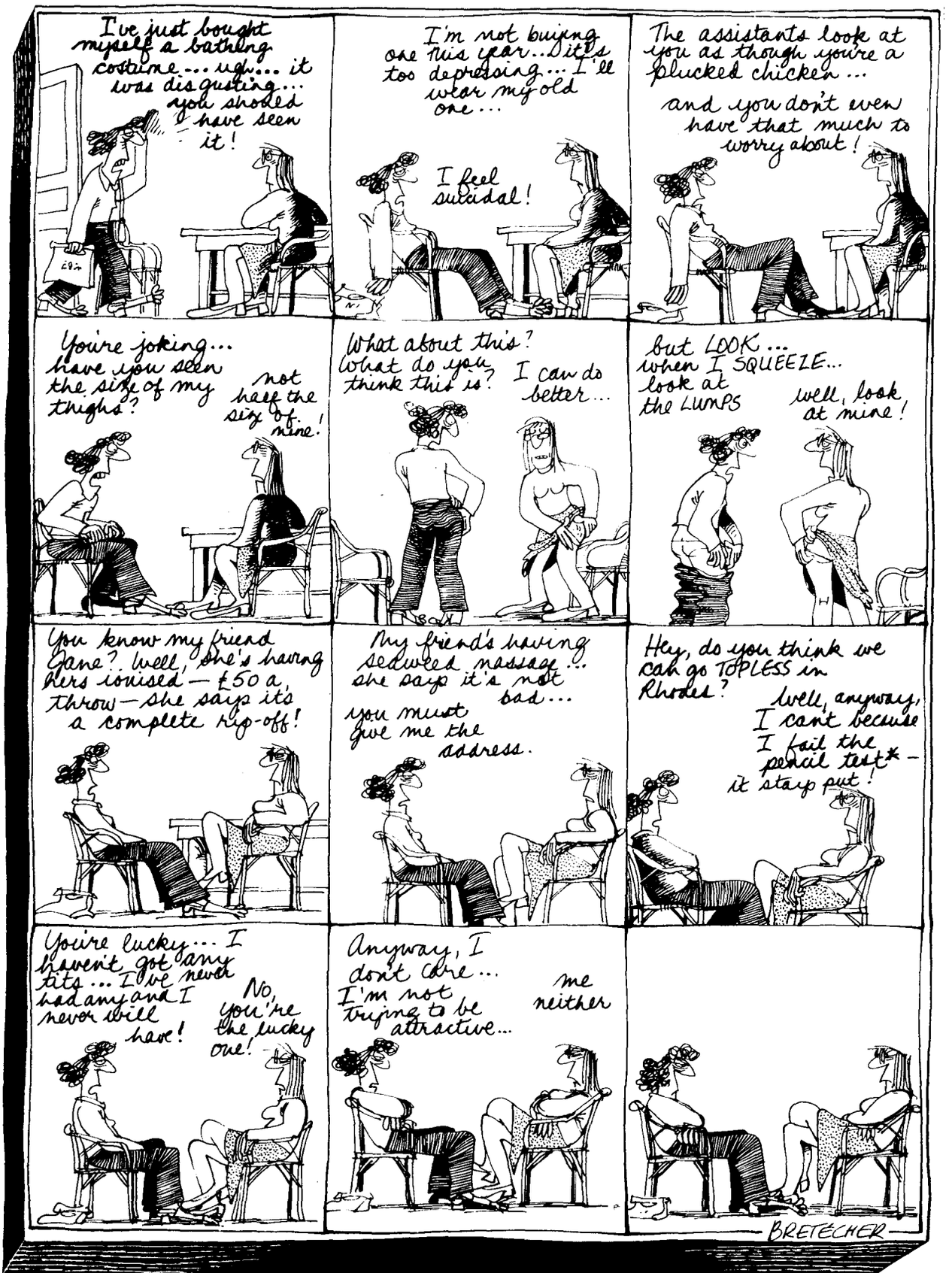
BRETECHER

CELLULITE


I've just bought myself a bathing costume... ugh... it was disgusting... you should have seen it!
I'm not buying one this year... it's too depressing... I'll wear my old one...
I feel suicidal!
The assistants look at you as though you're a plucked chicken...
and you don't even have that much to worry about!
You're joking... have you seen the size of my thighs?
not half the size of mine!
What about this? What do you think this is?
I can do better...
but LOOK... when I SQUEEZE... look at the LUMPS
well, look at mine!
You know my friend Jane? Well, she's having hers ionised — £50 a throw — she says it's a complete rip-off!
My friend's having sedated massage... she says it's not bad... you must give me the address.
Hey, do you think we can go TOPLESS in Rhodes?
Well, anyway, I can't because I fail the pencil test* — it stays put!
You're lucky... I haven't got any tits... I've never had any and I never will have!
No, you're the lucky one!
Anyway, I don't care... I'm not trying to be attractive...
me neither
BRETECHER

* PENCIL TEST: PUT A PENCIL HORIZONTALLY UNDER THE BREAST; IF IT STAYS PUT... IT'S NOT GOOD (NOTE FOR THE BRAINLESS)

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LETTERS

Loyalty on the Left

Pat Wall, Bradford

I can appreciate the problems of a weekly diarist of the Left in finding sufficient material to fill his column. Especially if such a column is devoted to avoiding teeth-kicking and promoting left-wing unity.

Brian Sedgemore (Diary 15 June) accuses Terry Fields and myself of 'splitting the Left vote' by standing for the constituency section of the NEC. A decision, it would appear, taken for us by 'Militant leaders' in defiance of the 'left-wing slate'. Could I ask what 'left-wing slate'? Neither this year nor any other has anyone discussed such a slate with me. More to the point no one in the local CLPs, soon to mandate delegates, knows of such a slate.

My experience as the nominee of the Shipley CLP for a number of years is that when I arrive at Conference several left-wing slates are being circulated. None of the groups circulating lists has ever consulted me and none to my knowledge has ever included my name.

It may, or may not be true that neither Terry or I 'can possibly get on the NEC this year'. However, without the backing of any slate I have on occasions received more votes than a number of Left MPs who were either as ignorant as I of a common Left slate, or stood in defiance of such a slate. Perhaps, who knows, some of the same MPs who are now complaining about Terry Fields and Pat Wall.

I suspect all such slates are drawn up in London, probably in Westminster, or over Sunday cocktails in Hackney. It is too far to attend such events and I am not one for Bloody Marys, or bloody-mindedness. Bradford, however, is on the phone.

Terry Fields and I are campaigning for Michael Meacher for deputy leader. What if he is elected? Who is not on the Left slate? Come on, Brian, give us a clue. Perhaps, just perhaps, if Terry and I were on the slate we too might have a 'possible' chance.

The real purpose of Brian Sedgemore's piece was to suggest how loyal the Left has been to Militant and how disloyal Militant has been to the Left. I do not know the names of the Left MPs complaining about Militant; however it could not include Eric Heffer, Bob Parry or Eddie Loyden. Three duly elected 'Militant' PPCs with a perfect right to stand gave them a free ride to Liverpool following re-distribution. An act of self-sacrifice in favour of Left unity with few parallels in recent years. Perhaps material for a weekly diarist short of copy.

For the record

Gary Mead, Banbury, Oxon.

It has been pointed out to me that in my *NS* article (22 July) I mentioned having in my possession a 'bug' when I was arrested in Poland. I should like to point out that this had been unwittingly left in my possession by a member of Solidarity's underground in Poland who I had interviewed some time previously, and was neither mine nor brought into Poland by me for any purpose whatsoever. It is, I hope, surely obvious that I would not endanger my activities as a journalist by being party to anything which might remotely be considered a 'criminal' action by the Polish state, even when such an action might be sympathetic to my own views. As I met the individual who owned the 'bug' only once and did not know of his whereabouts, it was impossible to return it, and it had simply remained among all my belongings. I disclaim, once again, that I conducted anything but the ordinary and usually accepted activities connected with obtaining accurate information.

Polish perils

V. G. Bennett, Director, Overseas Educational Appointments Dept, The British Council

I read Mr Mead's articulate account of his last two months in Poland with great interest (*NS* 22 July). Whether one considers that the situation was caused by his own actions or not, one can sympathise with what was clearly an alarming and unpleasant experience. However, his reference to being 'sacked' by the British Council, as the employer, gives a misleading impression of our role in the circumstances.

The British Council recruited Mr Mead as a senior lecturer in English language at Bydgoszcz University. His contract of employment was with the university, but the British Council issued a letter of agreement guaranteeing the terms and conditions of service in the contract. This is the Council's standard practice for recruitment of this kind. In view of the Council's apolitical status, it is not surprising that each agreement contains an undertaking not to engage in political activities. Mr Mead signed such an undertaking on taking up his appointment with Bydgoszcz University.

The Council terminated Mr Mead's agreement in mid-June under a clause which enabled him to receive his salary and repatriation costs until the end of his current agreement in September. This action was taken in an effort to speed his return to Britain. Had we terminated the agreement on the grounds of breach of contract, all payments to him would have ceased immediately.

The decision to terminate the Council's agreement with Mr Mead was taken after the most careful assessment of a highly sensitive situation. There has never been any attempt by the Council to 'ditch' Mr Mead. His safe release from a potentially dangerous situation has been our prime concern at all times in spite of his own admission that he had been in breach of his undertaking to us and his acknowledgment that the Council had been placed in an embarrassing position by his actions.

I am sorry he should now write about the Council in such grudging terms. So too must be his colleagues in Poland, whose work there has not been assisted by his action and whose presence may as a result be exposed to irritating and unnecessary surveillance.

Deputy leader – right or left?

Peter Hain, Labour Coordinating Committee, London W1

If, as Peter Kellner suggested (*NS* 8 July), a victory for Michael Meacher in Labour's deputy leader election would 'precipitate all manner of ructions' on the Party's right, then that does call into question their loyalty to the Party. They are no better than elements on the ultra left who are talking about future challenges for Leader and Deputy Leader, since there is no 'hard left' candidate standing for either post on this occasion.

It is as incumbent upon the right as it is upon the left of the Party to accept in advance the democratic verdict of the electoral college: and that means accepting Roy Hattersley or Michael Meacher, whoever wins. Both are figures of stature who have said they believe in a 'broad church' Labour Party.

That doesn't mean the winner must be given a blank cheque or that if he failed to carry out his duties he could not face being unseated. But Party members have more important things to do in rebuilding our shattered electoral base than retreat into factions over who should be Deputy Leader. Let's hope the contribution of elements on the right is more constructive than making off-the-record threats to journalists.

Nigerian rumbles

Ferdi Dennis, London W10

Suzanne Cronje's piece on Nigeria (*NS* 15 July) was welcomed. However, a number of her assertions were misleading.

The indigenisation of industries in Nigeria did not mean bringing all foreign investments under state or private control. What the indigenisation decrees did was to stipulate a minimum level of Nigerian entrepreneurial participation in certain types of businesses, usually service or light manufacturing. The involvement of Nigerian businessmen in these businesses does not, of course, ensure Nigerian control. In fact, it creates a more stable, and hence profitable, environment for foreign investors. There are major areas of the Nigerian economy which multinationals still control. As most radical commentators have observed, the indigenisation laws merely harmonised relations between foreign and indigenous capital by demarcating areas of operation.

Cronje's piece also seems to miss the entire significance of the forthcoming elections. Nigeria's current political system is a four-year experiment in a new form of democracy. The 'Westminster model' inherited from the British proved to be incapable of containing the various sources of conflict within the Nigerian body politic. This new 'presidential system', modelled after the American, is supposed to be an improvement. There are signs, however, that this new system is itself problematic. Can it survive the elections? I think this is the question most Nigerian observers must be asking.

Finally, I doubt very much that 'many young Nigerians are looking for "another Rawlings".' The military's 13-year rule was, for many Nigerians, young and old, quite a trying period.

A revolutionary analysis

Chris Harman, Socialist Worker

One expects a higher standard of journalism in the *New Statesman* than was the case with Malcolm Imrie's article on the far Left's reaction to the election results (*NS* 22 July).

His comments on the ideas of the Socialist Workers Party are a travesty of the truth. He seems to have skimmed through one article in *Socialist Review*, and to have ignored our attempts at a serious analysis of what is happening to the Left – an analysis contained in numerous articles in the *International Socialism Journal*, *Socialist Review* and *Socialist Worker*.

He writes, for instance, we have 'recently'

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revised our 'earlier' over-optimistic evaluation of the state of the working-class movement. In fact the SWP has been notorious on the Left for arguing virtually non-stop for the last four years that there has been a 'downturn' in the industrial struggle which was bound to find a reflection in a 'political downturn'. Hence it was that we were alone on the Left in arguing at the time of the special Wembley conference of the Labour Party that the triumph of the Bennites would be a fleeting one.

Perhaps what Malcolm Imrie does not like about us is that we do not draw the fashionable conclusion that the working class is finished. In fact we believe that in periods of intense social crisis the working class will be the crucial force in determining social development – witness its role in Poland 1980-81 and in spearheading the current protests in Chile and Brazil.

Of course the working class is not just the traditional, Labour-voting working class of the Northern cities and the Scottish central belt. It also includes both the suburban working class that grew up from the 1930s onwards in the Midlands and South, and the vast mass of low-grade white collar workers.

The point, however, is that the Labour Left has failed – as has the peace movement – because it has not succeeded in forging organic links with any of these sections of the class. This explains both the swing of the Left behind the dubious figure of Kinnock and the descent of the Greenham Common women into sheer mysticism.

The *New Statesman* may not agree with this analysis. But it would be fairer to your readers to actually set it out, rather than to ignore it with a piece of lightweight journalism.

Lesson for Labour

John F. Spellar, Bromley, Kent

Patricia Hewitt's article on the ALP (*NS* 8 July) contained a number of lessons for the British Labour Party. However, she omitted the most important one.

The 1969 elections showed the ALP as making small gains in Victoria compared with other states. Furthermore, it was argued the ultra left control of the Victorian state party damaged the image of the party not just at home but in other states. The pre-condition for Labour's victory in 1972 was the dissolution of the Victorian executive.

Today London still comprises one eighth of the Constituencies and unless we reverse our position here it will be impossible to obtain a national parliamentary majority. The disaster at Bermondsey demonstrated the dangers of the political position in London for the Labour Party as a whole. Any new leader of the Party who seriously wishes also to be Prime Minister will have to take a long hard look at London and show the same degree of resolution as Whitlam and the ALP.

Out of hiding

Michael Moorcock, London WC1

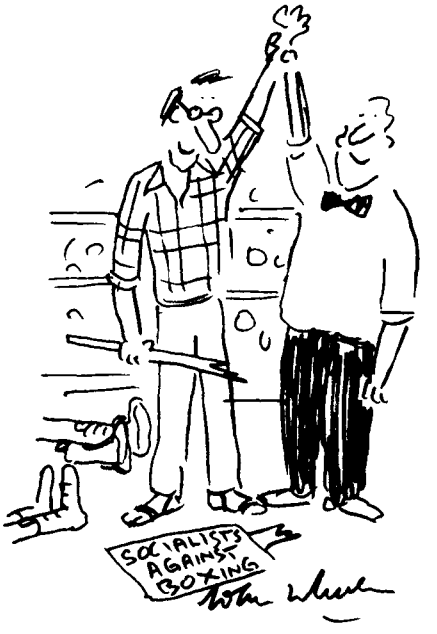
Nice to see Chris Priest (*NS* 15 July) suddenly taking an interest in politics after all these years. In his review of my book *Retreat From Liberty* (in which he either fails to understand or fails to give any of the arguments) he refers to an incident when a crowd turned ugly during the celebrations, in a pub, after England won the world cup. He says his memory of the incident is fairly different. I'm not surprised. True to form, he was looking for somewhere to hide at the time.

Addled brains

Donald Wood, Brecon, Powys

Brian Donald (Letters 22 July) describes himself as a '. . . professional boxing referee . . .'; if he referees professional boxing matches, it is difficult to reconcile his claim to being a socialist with his getting a living from one of the most capitalist-orientated exploitationary ways of making money.

Analysing his letter, there are many who would aver that Christ has caused as much suffering as did Galigula; that Mother Teresa likewise has caused as much misery as did Irma Griese. To accuse the 'anti-boxing squad' of dishonesty – always – (!) seems to me to be an attempt to substitute abusive generalisation for reasoned argument. A professorship in Biblical literature is not, for all of us, an enviable and laudable vocation; neither is that of a Baptist minister. Beau Jack's present occupation as a boot black at least doesn't damage anyone's brain.



Vernon Scannell's poetry suits some – not others; Chuck Davey's ownership of a large insurance agency isn't necessarily of much benefit to anyone but himself. Harry Grebb's million(s) and paternity of a Senator are certainly of doubtful value to society. Gully, the 'cool' (?) millionaire and racehorse owner is seen by some as a parasite; Rocky Graciano's victims find little consolation in his subsequent reform. Few of these idols fit in with a socialist philosophy.

Business, jazz and rugby football can all be used to gull the gullible and undoubtedly kill; this does not mean that boxing should be lumped in with them as laudable and tolerable.

Brian Donald is surely correct to oppose a ban on boxing; those of us who see it as an ugly appeal to our savage instincts hope it will gradually disappear along with bull-baiting, witch burning etc. – in short, that civilisation will eventually grow out of it.

A lost cause?

Valerie Fraser, Builth, Powys

If Anna Coote can talk about the Greenham Common protest in the past tense (*NS* 22 July) it would appear that the IBA's version of impartiality is rubbing off on her too.

Labour's agents

Peter Wheeler, Assistant Agent Ipswich Labour Party

After the Labour Party's recent defeat at the polls it is quite right for the *New Statesman* to look critically both at the organisation of the election campaign and of the Party generally. It is not right, however, for the *NS* to level unsubstantiated charges of 'unlawful sex discrimination' against the National Union of Labour Organisers (NULO) over the issue of part-time agents (*NS* 15 July).

Quite simply, the Labour Party needs full-time organisers (men and women!) more than ever and it is the job of NULO to defend and build up the full-time agency service (a task in which, up to now, we have had precious little assistance from anybody else – the *New Statesman* included).

Obviously, in areas where there is at present little or no organisation, a part-time agent would be an advance in organisational terms and should be supported. However, given the past track record of the Labour Party in respect of the Agency Service, many NULO members suspect that part-time agencies would be created at the expense of existing full-time posts. The people appointed would in practice be expected to work full-time for half wages and, before long, the full-time agency service would be destroyed.

It is not arrogance which makes my union believe that this would be disastrous for the Labour Party – it is a genuine concern for the future of the Party from a union which has been fighting the cause, usually in isolation, for many years.

Labour's youth budget

Geoffrey Norris, Chairperson, National Organisation of Labour Students (1982-3)

Your interesting article on Walworth Road (*NS* 15 July) was marred by an inaccuracy concerning the Party's youth budget. The budget is in fact divided between the Young Socialists, an organisation indeed controlled by the 'dead hand' of Militant, and the National Organisation of Labour Students, an organisation dominated by a loose group of democratic socialists firmly in the mainstream of the Labour Left but eschewing the sectarianism of much of the Left and consciously attempting to develop popular socialist politics. The effectiveness of this approach was shown by NOLS winning the political leadership of the National Union of Students in 1982. Unlike much of the rest of the Party NOLS has begun to take sexual and gender politics seriously, while at the same time addressing itself to more traditional socialist issues. And in the General Election NOLS produced effective and lively publicity material avoiding 'chronically turgid prose'. All in all the Party is getting good value for the £10,000 grant it makes available to NOLS.

Let's have it Dunn again

Ken Worpole, London N16

A significant detail which Jennifer Breen omitted in her otherwise interesting and valuable essay on women writers (*NS* 8 July), is that Nell Dunn's *Up the Junction*, which she praises so highly, originated I believe as a series of pieces for the *New Statesman*. It would be good to see a revival of that kind of space in the magazine for documentary writing today.

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Paul Foot

A real communist

Memoirs
PETRO G. GRIGORENKO *Collins/Harvill* £15

There are those who say that the horrors of Stalin's Russia flowed naturally from the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. They forget how much time and effort Stalin and his henchmen devoted to rooting out the Bolshevik tradition. By 1939, only 1.3 per cent of the members of the Russian Communist Party had been members in 1917, and only eight per cent had been members in 1920, after the civil war.

Five-sixths of the young Communist Party of 1920, the leaders and organisers of revolutionary Russia, had left the party by 1939. The vast majority of these had been 'purged', many of them murdered by Stalin's secret police and terror machine. Of the 13 people who sat on the Politbureau of the Party (effectively the top administration of Russia) from 1917 to 1923, only two – Lenin and Stalin – died a natural death. All the others were either executed or died in prisons after their arrest for 'subversion'.

The revolutionary Communist tradition terrified Stalin and his successors far more than did their enemies without. Their unelected and totally irresponsible power was far more dangerously threatened by that tradition than by Cold War rhetoric from the West. So they reserved for the old Bolsheviks and Leninists a special brand of persecution.

Peter Grigorenko was only ten in 1917, but he was soon to come under the spell of the Revolution. In these memoirs, he describes the visit to his remote and poverty-stricken village in the Ukraine of a young Communist lecturer who had come to speak about International Women's Day. He seemed an 'envoy from another world'. Grigorenko resolved at once to join the Communist Party.

After some time in factories and in industrial training, he became a military officer. He served with distinction and bravery in the Second World War, and was promoted to the rank of general. Although he was once accused by a superior officer of having a 'restless character', Grigorenko admits that he was through all this period 'ideologically a Stalinist'. He shut his eyes to the purges of the late 1930s, preferring simply to believe that all the heroes of the 1917 revolution had somehow become 'fascist dogs'.

He was shaken from his Stalinism by Nikita Khruschev's famous speech at the 1956 Party Congress, in which some of the excesses of the Stalin period were exposed. While many who felt like him basked in what they wrongly felt was a time for relaxation and liberalisation, General Grigorenko was tortured by doubt. He began to ask questions, all of which were based on the Leninist ideas of his youth. If such terrible things could happen under Stalin, he mused, was that not a comment on the state of the Communist Party? Where was the connection between the Party and the masses on which Lenin had insisted?

These doubts came to a head in 1961 when Grigorenko was a delegate from his military institute to a Communist Party conference in Moscow. He shattered the tedious calm of the conference with a stirring speech which harked on the betrayal of Bolshevik and Leninist principles. 'We must abolish all conditions which give rise to violations of Leninist principles, in particular high salaries and lack of replacement of officials', he concluded. He was promptly, though not without opposition from the few rank and file delegates to the conference, ordered out of the hall. His life after that became a long battle with the KGB.

They singled him out for special persecution not just because he was a dissenter, but because he was a revolutionary in the Leninist tradition. The party hierarchy hated his advocacy of the removability of leaders. At his 'trial' for his 1961 speech, the deputy chairman of the Party collegium bawled at him:

> He wants democracy, you see! So every good-for-nothing can meddle in the work of the party institutions and hinder the efforts of conscientious officials! He wants free elections, you see, so that all kinds of demagogues can slander conscientious Communists and can hinder the people from electing those who are the most worthy!

Such a man was clearly unsafe, and when the authorities discovered Grigorenko, his son and other 'dissidents' had founded the Alliance for the Struggle for the Rebirth of Leninism, which called as its first principle for the right to recall all party officials and which concentrated on the strikes and demonstrations of workers against the 'workers' state' the KGB went into action. Generals could not be dealt with like ordinary dissidents. They could not conceivably have come to such views rationally.

In 1964, Peter Grigorenko, one of the most rational and lucid men in all Russia, spent his first spell in a Russian mental hospital, officially classified as insane. On his release, at the age of 57, he flung himself body and soul into the small, but astonishingly courageous Russian opposition. His main comrade was another Bolshevik, even older than he, who had fought in the revolution, Alexei Kostyorin. Once again, the inspiration of the group which gathered around Kostyorin was Lenin, and revolutionary communism. 'We had faith in a "real" communism', Grigorenko explains. They were known among the dissidents as the 'communist faction'.

This faith shines through in the most moving passage in the book, which describes a meeting organised by Crimean Tatars, exiled and humiliated by Stalin. With the enthusiastic help of the Grigorenko/Kostyorin group, the Tatars were beginning to discover their self-confidence. 'They were tired of being afraid', Grigorenko writes. His account of his speech to that meeting is full of life and hope. It was founded in the attitudes towards the nationalities which had united the Bolsheviks across Russia 50 years previously.

'In your struggle', he advised the Tatars,

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'do not shut yourselves in a narrow nationalist shell. Establish contacts with all the progressive people of other nationalities in the Soviet Union. Do not consider your cause to be solely an internal Soviet matter . . . ' The advice had its effect. In the tremendous applause which greeted the speech, one tune rose above all the nationalist chants and slogans. It was the *Internationale*.

For this insanity, Grigorenko went once again to a mental hospital – for five years and more. This time, he was force-fed and beaten up. The asylum he went to at Chernyakhovsk, was one of the worst in Russia, where the 'patients' were consistently beaten or drugged into submission. To his credit, he does not dwell too long on the horrors. His outrage comes through much more powerfully than his pain. His quite extraordinary courage never left him. Within a few months of his release – in 1974 – he was protesting and demonstrating again. Finally, the authorities got rid of him another way. They gave him a passport to America for an operation, and refused to allow him to return.

AND SO to the book's sad ending; to the collapse of all the grand ideas of Grigorenko's youth and of the inspiration of so many years of courageous struggle into a miserable dribble of Cold War propaganda. 'America is like a sea of light where night is turned into day. Everything is superbly organised', he concludes.

The old Communist who had struggled so hard in his own country to make authority accountable and officials replaceable, who had fought above all else for the equality of all people whatever their talents and abilities, is suddenly, pathetically converted to a society governed by a military and industrial complex every bit as irresponsible as in Russia, a society where inequality is raised almost to the status of religion. How the Russian secret service, whose master is now the country's top official, must rejoice that one of their most dangerous enemies has thus succumbed to Cold War partisanship, which is always just as abject and degrading on one side as it is on the other.

The sadness seeps backwards through this book, and pollutes it. It is almost as though the old man is apologising for the ideas and inspiration which led him to such great sacrifices and triumphs. His greatest work of organisation and propaganda among the working people of his country is underplayed, almost forgotten. He blurs the distinction between those dissidents who fought for the freedom of their people, and those who fought simply for one side of the Cold War against another. I don't know how much this is his own choice or that of his American publisher, but the book is badly flawed as a result.

But Peter Grigorenko cannot write himself down completely. Again and again, his revolutionary past shines through his apologies. Almost in spite of himself, his story is a constant reminder that there are still indomitable revolutionaries in Russia whose aim, like that of revolutionaries elsewhere, is to change the world, not obliterate it. □

OPPRESSION
James Bentley

Top people

Persecution East and West: Human Rights, Political Prisoners and Amnesty
COSMAS DESMOND *Penguin* £2.50

This is an important and also a very personal book. After training in a Roman Catholic seminary, Cosmas Desmond spent 12 years in South Africa, where his increasing involvement in the struggle against apartheid led to six years of restriction orders.

'The fact that a person is tortured to death in prison is enough to shock and anger anybody', he writes, 'but when it happens to somebody with whom you were having a drink a few weeks before, you have a different experience of that and every other death in detention.' Cosmas Desmond still vividly remembers the constant fear of wondering when 'they' are going to come and his fear of what they might do to him. Six years later any noise which awakens him in the night is 'them'. But he recalls still more the humanity of the oppressed rather than the inhumanity of the oppressors. The slogan of South African liberation groups, conscious of their own inner freedom, is not 'Power *will be* ours' but 'Power *is* ours'.

The West, he argues, is at least as bad as the oppressive régimes. The United States has historical responsibility for conditions in such repressive countries as Chile and El Salvador, just as Europe has a similar responsibility for Africa and much of Asia. In addition, Western countries are today in collusion with such régimes. 'If the West is prepared to have trade and other relations with, and particularly if it is willing to sell arms to oppressive governments, then it shares the responsibility for what those governments are doing to their own people', he argues.

Desmond believes that the West is prepared to do these things because it shares the oppressors' fundamental belief that political and economic interests are more important than people. For this reason at the time of the Rhodesian Unilateral Declaration of Independence the British government refused to commit itself unequivocally to economic sanctions. He uses Amnesty International reports on Northern Ireland to support his contention that the Western democracies 'do not rely only on fostering the illusion of freedom and on practising institutionalised economic oppression in order to preserve the status quo; they also revert to overt political repression.'

The chapter on capitalism and oppression is followed by one on socialism and oppression. Just as Desmond holds that there is no point in trying to better South Africa by making that country more like us (since 'the present similarity is the problem'), he has no truck with the notion that political oppression in socialist countries would disappear if only they would accept some of our standards. On the contrary, in Desmond's view, 'The Soviet Union is "guilty" when judged according to socialist norms of freedom and equality, which is more important than the fact that it does not conform to the Western understanding of individual rights.'

Returning from South Africa Desmond became director of the British Section of Amnesty International. He was dismissed after what seems to have been a particularly vicious piece of internal politics. The experience scarred him. He says he experienced more personal animosity from members of Amnesty than he did from members of the South African security police and that 'six months of Amnesty harassment had taken a greater toll of me and my family than all the years of South African harassment'.

Readers will judge whether this experience has warped his judgment when he comes to criticise the efforts of bodies like Amnesty International to alleviate oppression. I do not think it has. He criticises, for example, Amnesty's rule that in their work for prisoners of conscience members must never break the law of the country in which they live, as if such laws were invariably more sacrosanct than people's consciences. He criticises its élitist approach, not only in seeking the release of political prisoners by talking principally to those oppressing them but also in seeking 'quality rather than quantity' in its members and thus valuing lawyers, doctors, businessmen and politicians more than ordinary people with no letters after their names.

Desmond acknowledges Amnesty's undoubted success in reducing human suffering. He quotes extensively from its reports. But he insists that people who wish to remain politically unsullied can only 'be engaged as human rights stretcher bearers whenever they are needed'. His chapter on 'The United Nations' Contribution' argues that such inter-governmental organisations can do even less than Amnesty since they completely depend on the co-operation of the governments involved in oppression.

For Cosmas Desmond a country is oppressive to the extent that people are excluded from the political process. Oppression is a product of élitism and cannot be overcome by a counter-élite. Oppression must be overcome by equality, as Cosmas Desmond tries to demonstrate by means of his own Christian understanding and his socialism. He quotes with approval the Latin American theologian Gustavo Gutierrez:

> Attempts to bring about changes within the existing order have proved futile . . . Only a radical break from the status quo, that is, a profound transformation of the private property system, access to the power of the exploited class, and a social revolution that would break this dependence [of poorer countries on more powerful ones] would allow for the change to a new society.

Is Desmond too hopeful? 'To love people and to use things is a more human and fulfilling pastime than loving things and

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using people', he writes. 'One can surely derive more enjoyment from fewer things, if one is aware that the more one has the higher the price that has to be paid in other people's sweat, hunger and, in extreme cases, even lives. But perhaps there are people who can only derive pleasure from perversions.' Unfortunately, there are □

POLITICS
Jon Cook

Assumptions

Socialist Arguments
ed. D. COATES and G. JOHNSTON
Martin Robertson £16.50 & £5.95

Socialist Arguments is a book written for hard times. Its editors rightly assume a context of indifference or active hostility to socialism, one in which right-wing voices have come to hold sway in debates about the British crisis. The litany is by now maddeningly familiar: trades union power is the cause of economic decline; the economy is unbalanced by excessive public expenditure; monetarist policies are the only solution; socialism means the stifling of individual liberty and initiative, the extension of bureaucratic power and enforced collectivisation. Restating the case for socialism means refuting these and related arguments.

It is difficult to do justice to the range and detail of argument that David Coates and Gordon Johnston have brought together. Andrew Gamble provides lucid refutation of monetarism, a refutation that goes to the heart of the supposed authority and strength of the conservative position. Gamble takes the main propositions of monetarism and demolishes them one by one. Thus the claim that inflation is *caused* by increases in the money supply is shown to be unproven, and probably unproveable, while the view that governments control the money supply becomes a very shaky assumption in an economy where a commercial banking system has as much say in regulating the flow of money as any government department.

The idea that 'excessive' pay claims by trades unions promote unemployment by pricing people out of jobs enjoys a wide currency. To refute this notion, Gamble appeals to the evidence of Chile, a country which no doubt is the envy of Margaret Thatcher, but whose vigorous application of monetarism combined with a suppression of trade union activity has produced an unemployment rate of 15%. He then goes on to expose the nightmare that lies on the other side of the monetarist fantasy of self-regulating markets, where, unhindered by trade union activity, the supply of labour is matched by its demand. The result would certainly be the employment of a significant proportion of the workforce at wages either at or below the level of subsistence and, as Gamble points out, 'an economic system that can solve its unemployment problem only by employing people at subsistence or below subsistence wages has not really solved its problem at all'.

Andrew Gamble's essay shares a virtue with others in this collection. They reveal the right-wing belief in the 'free play of market forces' or the 'self-regulating character of the market' as little more than a grotesque authoritarian myth which has been able to pass itself off in the name of a reality dangerously denied and forgotten in post-war British history. Its character as myth is exposed in a variety of ways. Gamble describes its original fiction, the belief that society has ever been or might be a 'natural equilibrium or harmony' consisting of sovereign individuals engaging in acts of exchange in order to maximise their own interests. The belief cannot be sustained even in the terms of its own theory which invariably accompanies advocacy of the market as a natural social form with the requirement of a strong state able to maintain the rules of exchange against the anarchic competition of individuals each in pursuit of profit.

In his essay on trade-union power, David Coates takes up the themes, and the falsehoods, of market doctrine. He points out that the labour contract is imbalanced from the start:

> When a worker sells his labour power to a firm, his whole life situation depends on the ways he can earn . . . Yet the employer has no such stake in the contract with the worker. For him one worker is just an extra unit of cost.

Unions developed in order to compensate for this inequity. Their power is always defensive. Because the unions have been moderately successful in this aim does not mean they have too much power, least of all in the area of industrial decision-making where, for example, they have little or no say in decisions about investment, factory location, product-design or marketing. This should be common sense, of course, but it isn't, given the current hysteria about trade union power.

The subject of John Westergaard's essay, 'Income, wealth and the welfare state', should be common sense, too. Against those who would claim that redistributive mechanisms of taxation and welfare have made Britain into a society of equals and, according to the Right, too equal for its own good, Westergaard brings an array of statistical evidence which demonstrates that Britain is a country with massive inequalities of wealth and opportunity. Nor is there any evidence of a sustained trend toward significant redistribution. Even a conservative estimate suggests that, for example, in 1970-77, 'the share of the richest 1% in all real post-tax income would come out . . . at about 8% – rather more than the aggregate share of the poorest fifth of the population'. The point is that the wealthy are still so wealthy that redistributing what they've got would make a difference to the poor.

Socialist Arguments contains other valuable essays on racism, the media, the myth of welfare scroungers, and the character of the British state. If that gives some indication of its range, it's also true that there are serious omissions: nothing on education, one of the earliest targets of the new Right, nor on the continuing subordination of women in our supposedly equal society. But, despite these gaps, the book offers a real initiative for political debate and action, a means of exposing all those grave and realistic right-wing philosophers for the shabby ideologues they are. Sadly not one of the current leaders of the Labour Party has seemed capable of taking this initiative and pressing it home to advantage. □

DIARIES
Michael Heffernan

On the edge

Irish Journal
HEINRICH BOLL *Secker* £7.95

From dirty Dublin the train moves slowly across the ever less populated Bog of Allen towards Westport and the house Heinrich Böll has rented for his family. Unable to change his German money, he finds everyone willing to offer him credit. Here the fields grow stones, but the stations have carefully tended gardens and bright white fences. At each stop a bale of cigarettes is unloaded and a boy walks the platform with a tray of sweets and comics to sell to the dwindling passengers. It is the edge of Europe.

'This Ireland exists; but whoever goes there and fails to find it has no claim on the author.' In one, literal sense we must fail to find Böll's Ireland. The visit his 'journal' records took place in the mid-Fifties, well before the EEC boom transformed economic life, and before the Vatican Council irreversibly changed the face of the Catholic culture he celebrates. The Liverpool boats are no longer crowded with exiled workers bringing home money for their wives and children in Mayo; and though the streets of Limerick are still as damp and grey as Böll

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found them, the children are better dressed than this one: 'What eight years ago had been a cheap jacket, but new, now served as jacket, overcoat, trousers and shirt in one – the grown-up sleeves rolled up, string around the middle.'

This is a book of delicately wrought descriptions and stories, much of it less reportage than imaginative construction. Böll watches and listens with a novelist's eye and ear, always finding the detail that speaks the difference. To anyone who remembers Irish life at that time the flavour is recovered at once: milk jugs on the windowsill, cows grazing by the roadside, children everywhere, ice-cream in outlandish places and (something I had forgotten) the ubiquitous safety-pins, strung together behind lapels and inside cardigans. More powerfully, Böll's journal is an attempt to integrate the experience of the people with his own. In the Dublin slums, he takes refuge in a church of typical plaster-saint ugliness; kneeling in the light of many candles and the odour of incense, he notices a brass plate asking him to pray for the soul of a boy who died at 13, when he was just that age himself. Walking through the streets and drinking in one of the private booths which have now all but vanished from Dublin bars, 'I saw him alive, as old as I was, saw myself for a few moments as 37-year-old Kevin; his dark-haired wife's face had a greenish pallor. The shadow did not raise the glass to its lips and so I drank for Kevin Cassidy.'

Böll's capacity, and need, to identify is one quality that distinguishes his journal from similar travel books about Ireland – Synge's on the Aran Islands, for example, where there is always a sense of the civilised man on the run from decadence, in search of primitive wisdom. The world which Böll comes from has been destroyed by a war which put in question all notions of civilisation: he seeks not a vigorous language, but a practical moral order to set against both Hitler *and* the bureaucratic capitalism of the new Germany. The Ireland he idealises is morally sophisticated, not primitive. A Catholic, he feels himself, even as an alien, coming home. No wonder his book depicts an Ireland another traveller in the Fifties might well not have found.

The men and women of Böll's Ireland are pulled between two forces, never in balance – poverty and abundance. The poverty they suffer is clear enough; the abundance they enjoy is often hidden: 'The cemeteries are full of people the world could not do without.' 'When God made time he made plenty of it.' Time and people are always gifts; above all children, who have a place by right and are never resented. This book was first published in German in 1957, and the excellent translation in America twenty years ago. Since then, of course, Ireland has changed out of comfortable recognition. After boom, bankruptcy looms – a situation which can be gauged by the unprecedented price of drink, which, to any regular observer, is steadily destroying social life. But the moral sensibility of the country appears to thrive: a government, itself unsteady on its political feet, is struggling over the wording in a referendum that will make citizens of the unborn. For where is one entitled to security if not in one's mother's womb?

Heinrich Böll is in touch with the depth of Irish feeling on these matters, which so astonishes liberal observers. In a postscript written in 1967 he laments that 'to know that His Majesty the Pill will succeed where all the Majesties of Great Britain have failed – in reducing the number of Irish children – seems to be no cause for rejoicing.' If so much value is placed on the dead and on the unborn, what of the living, who must go hungry or emigrate: Böll's answer, I think, would be orthodox: the Ireland he found was a place where human beings could be valued as such and not as part of some economy of consciousness.

After a visit to Russia, the young Rilke wrote:

> Sometimes a man stands up during supper
> and walks outdoors, and keeps on walking,
> because of a church that stands somewhere in the East;
> and his children say blessings on him as if he were dead.

The church the young Böll walked towards lay in the opposite geographical direction. Yet, as with Rilke, the landscape he sought belonged to an inner world, one that would stand against the pale imaginative scenery of home: 'The whiskey is bitter, comforting, and somewhere to the west, across 3,000 miles of water, and somewhere to the east, two seas across to get there – are those who believe in activity and progress.' □

FEMINISM
Marion Glastonbury

Unsisterly

Right-wing Women: The Politics of Domesticated Females
ANDREA DWORKIN *Women's Press* £4.95

When the National Women's Conference of 1977 ratified a resolution in support of homosexual rights, Andrea Dworkin, a Jewish lesbian reporting for the magazine *M/s*, asked some delegates from Utah how they felt. The Mormons responded by cornering her against the railing of the topmost balcony in the Houston Coliseum, at an angle so precarious that it might have ended her inquiries for ever but for the timely intervention of observant friends.

As its title implies, this incisive study encompasses a wide range of unsisterly postures, from the clenched fist of the religious zealot to the cowed shrug of the captive housewife. Some tamed shrews have gained fame and fortune by telling the story of their conversion and advocating the sort of conjugal devotion that substitutes Jesus for the husband in the mind's eye. But, although anti-feminist ideology may occasionally furnish a career, it offers, according to Dworkin, none but self-defeating solutions: a bid for survival that is tantamount to suicide.

Coming to terms with patriarchy, conforming to male requirements and propitiating male power, women subordinate their human potential and personal integrity to one of two ideals: 'the brothel or the farm', in the belief that beauty and breeding, the proper functions of their sex, will be socially valued, win approval, disarm hostility and ensure protection. That these are equally vain hopes can be seen, first, from the fate of such bright stars as Marilyn Monroe, and, second, from the present state of modern warfare and the labour market neither of which now requires mass recruitment from each generation. So what price the fecundity of Mrs Average? More than ever before, women are becoming expendable. The progress of reproductive technology may soon render child-bearers as redundant as their pauperised elders, 'displaced homemakers' who now languish in Medicaid institutions, having outlived their usefulness.

Dworkin argues not only that groups who suffer conspicuous neglect – the aged poor, welfare recipients, the chronically tranquillised, all the over-burdened and underpaid – typically contain an unduly high proportion of women, but also that men in an oppressed class are 'feminised', reduced to female status, by that oppression. The cries of rape with which white Southerners justified the lynching of negroes following their emancipation were a wholly new and unprecedented charge, unheard of during the time of slavery. As chattels, blacks had never posed a sexual threat. Once free, they were accused of stealing virility, as a baneful consequence of their ethnic nature. Their liberty unmanned their former owners; robbed whites of their prerogative as predators.

Racial prejudice, anti-semitism, homophobia and crusading bigotry of all kinds are readily fostered among women who have 'good reason to hate but not the courage to rebel'. They divert the rage caused by real grievances away from home where it belongs, towards the supposedly dangerous outsiders identified as targets by the demonology of the organised Right.

The intuitive analysis that Dworkin applies to her compatriots, their history and recent political experience works well on Sixties radicalism, the economics of prostitution and the effects of American chauvinism: 'Oil that the U.S. needs rests on U.S. property wherever it happens to be. Europe is U.S. property if the U.S. wants to base missiles there'. Only as she moves further afield do her prophecies begin to seem farfetched, her imputation of motives dubious, her passion ever so slightly misplaced. In the interpretation of Judaic law and Christian dogma she tends to rely on guess-work; in her approach to literature on hyperbole. A good case need not be overstated. Why call George Eliot, Jane Austen and Virginia Woolf 'the greatest writers in the English language'? It may well be true that all cul-

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tures at all times manifest the underlying logic of male supremacy if you look hard enough. But lay sermons to this effect should include some acknowledgment that lust is not always violent, coition not always painful, pregnancy not always unwanted and children not an unmitigated curse. □

POETRY
James Campbell

Shop talk

Complete Poetical Works
ROBERT GARIOCH *Macdonald* £12.95

Robert Garioch is Edinburgh's poet: he is, to adapt a recent phrase of Iain Crichton Smith's, the laureate of its stones. His highly crafted verse is moulded out of the ordinary material of the city and its streets: districts and their landmarks; local customs and occasional events; famous sons, odd characters and types, and simple snatches of their conversation overheard in a pub. Most of his work – and by far the best of it – is written in Scots; poems such as 'Embro to the Ploy', 'To Robert Fergusson', 'Sisyphus', and even later efforts like 'Punk', employ a mode which is closer to spoken Scots than that produced by any other writer of this century. This does not mean that Garioch cannot be enjoyed – and enjoyment is the primary reward for reading this poet – by those who know little of Scotland, or are unfamiliar with its dialects: Garioch's satire and its targets are universal, and his Scots, like that of Burns, is frequently little more than an accent. In 'Elegy', one of the 21 'Edinburgh Sonnets', he wrote of the headmasters he had to work with when a schoolteacher:

> Ane tellt me it was time I learnt to write –
> round-haund, he meant – and saw about my hair:
> I mind of him, beld-heidit, wi a kyte.
>
> Ane sneerit quarterly – I cuidna square
> my savings bank – and sniftert in his spite.
> Weill, gin they arena deid, it's time they were.

Language apart, the most conspicuously Scottish thing about Garioch's verse is its sense of humour (and again, it is emphatically east-coast humour). He offers a much-needed response to the caricature of the Scot as a dour worthie with nothing on his mind but drink, the weather and God's wrath. Yet Garioch uses this image for humorous purposes. He appears not to take himself seriously: he shies away from sophistication, bends the knee to big-wiggery, is led on by hypocrites and impressed by the wonders of science and 'technique'; he is everybody's fool. 'I'm daft', he explained in 'Perfect'; 'They say I'm daft, and they're richt!' The stance was one which Garioch carried over, to some extent, into life: at the poetry readings at which he excelled (until his death in 1981) he was content to appear cannily 'auld-farrant', allowing his hilarious, satirical verse to do the real talking.

To say merely that Garioch's Scots is 'authentic' begs the question of how many even among his Scottish readers have spoken, or heard spoken, the language he uses. Yet the term sticks, for it is through rhythm and atmosphere, rather than diction, that Garioch's verse conveys this natural feeling; regardless of what subject occupies the foreground, a background music is playing, which derives from the speech of shops and pubs, half-forgotten but instantly recognisable. It is for being closely in touch with this partially submerged world that Garioch is most valuable.

This handsome new edition supercedes the *Collected Poems* of 1977. It contains about 100 extra poems, 20 more pages of notes, an expanded (though not yet comprehensive) glossary, and two appendices. Sixty-eight of the new poems are sonnets translated from the Italian of Giuseppe Belli, which achieve the same standard as the 52 in the *Collected*. (It is sad that the publisher's plan for a separate edition of these was thwarted by the poet's death.) The book is prefaced by a neat note written by Sydney Goodsir Smith for Garioch's *Selected Poems* in 1966, plus a reprinted review written by the editor of this volume, Robin Fulton. Worthwhile though both of these pieces are, they seem to me rather a poor substitute for a proper introduction to this important book.

Besides the Belli sonnets, most of the other new poems are originals which were found in notebooks. Some of these had been published in magazines, and although few of them are among Garioch's best, many are interesting. They demonstrate well the way in which Garioch's voice was dependent upon the attitudes and humorous inflections which the Scots accent offered, and which he found lacking in any other dialect, including 'standard' English. Other verses among this new material are little more than jottings, and some had even been deleted from the notebooks, as Mr Fulton informs us in his notes. To include them here must have been an awkward decision for editor and publisher, but it is a dubious one – when asked by editors for a poem in his last years, Garioch usually pleaded a silent typewriter, so it is fair to assume that he meant most of this work to remain unpublished. Shouldn't a man's scribblings be left in peace, even if he is a great poet?

It would be unfair to carp too much, however. Macdonald's of Edinburgh have done really excellent work over the years with Scottish poetry, and in bringing out this new edition of Garioch's work have served well the man who found a rhyme for 'the Caledonian antisyzigy'. □

Donald Hall

Mr Wakeville on Interstate 90

'Now I will abandon the route of my life
as my shadowy wives abandon me, taking my children.
I will stop somewhere. I will park in a summer street
where the days tick like metal in the stillness.
Then I will rent the room over Bert's Modern Barbershop
where the *To Let* sign leans in the plateglass window;
or I will buy the brown *Bungalow for Sale*.

'I will work forty hours a week clerking at the paintstore.
On Fridays I will cash my paycheck at Six Rivers Bank
and stop at Harvey's Market and talk with Harvey.
Walking on Maple Street I will speak to everyone.
At basketball games I will cheer for my neighbours' sons.
I will watch my neighbours' daughters grow up, marry,
raise children. The joints of my fingers will stiffen.

'There will be no room inside me for other places.
I will attend funerals regularly and weddings.
I will chat with the mailman when he comes on Saturdays.
I will shake my head when I hear of the florist
who drops dead in the greenhouse over a flat of pansies;
I spoke with her only yesterday . . .
When lawyer elopes with babysitter I will shake my head.

'When Harvey's boy enlists in the Navy
I will wave goodbye at the Trailways Depot with the others.
I will vote Democratic; I will vote Republican.
I will applaud the valedictorian at graduation
and wish her well as she goes away to the University
and weep as she goes away. I will live in a steady joy;
I will exult in the ecstasy of my concealment.'

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The Nation's Health

G. F. NEWMAN *Granada* £8.95

On first perusal, *The Nation's Health* appears to have little in common with the well-worn tradition of the medical novel. Where that seeks to praise Western medicine, Newman is out to bury it. Our heroine, young Dr Jessie Marvell, spends the four parts of the book travelling (with cast of thousands) through four 'problem' specialities – surgery, obstetrics, geriatrics and psychiatry – with growing doubts about the efficacy of acute, interventionist medicine and increasing leanings towards holistic medicine. Yet, in her own way, she is just as much a paragon as Dr Kildare – caring and concerned – and Newman's critique of medicine reaches back to Cronin.

In content, the book's virtues are also its vices. It ventures into unglamorous areas of medical care, from the staffing problems of hospital porters to NHS politics, the daily horsetrading between District and Regional Health Authorities which passes for decision-making. Focusing on a woman doctor allows Newman to reveal the sexism implicit in medicine, the male mateyness which threads through each encounter. He is sensitive to the ploys which doctors and patients use to deny emotionally charged situations. The action takes place against a backdrop of penury and penny-pinching, illustrating the relentless pressures on NHS staff to squeeze and accommodate. It is very thoroughly researched, and ideologically terribly correct, and yet at times reads more like a check-list of radical medical causes than a living, breathing novel. Third world doctors, chemotherapy, induction of labour, ECT, community care – they're all there, every burning contemporary medical issue, thinly novelised.

Indeed, the question has to be asked, why novelise it at all? Newman's narrative style is limp, and his stab at demotic speech consists of contracting 'it's' to 's'. The book is being made into a TV series, and it has all the hallmarks of a TV script, with stage directions in place of character development.

At times, he perhaps goes too far in the direction of his previous work (*Law and Order*, *Operation Bad Apple*) in seeing direct conspiracies where common values are more to blame. Yet some powerful scenes, such as the eviction of a geriatric ward (based on a recognisable recent true case), aren't overwritten, and Newman generally indulges less in a spot of doctor-bashing than in a genuine attempt to show the impossible structural situation in which individual doctors struggle.

Anne Karpf

Holy Virility – The Social Construction of Masculinity

EMMANUEL REYNAUD *Pluto* £3.50

I read this book with a growing sense of disappointment. What seemed an interesting new attempt by a man to look at masculinity turned out to be a mass of naive generalisations, bland truths and wishful thinking. And, above all, shoddy research. There's nothing like a little heterosexual male intuition in the area of sexual politics to end up with a bad book.

As a gender, we men are pretty confused about our own sexuality, the relationship between sex and power, and how to respond to the, often contradictory, demands of feminists. Instead of starting from this confusion and writing in a tentative but thorough way, Reynaud breezes through chapters on our sexuality, our penises, the way we treat women and each other like a child discovering a forbidden new toy. If this writing is symptomatic of the French men's movement (in which Reynaud is 'actively involved'), then give me Norman Mailer any time. At least Mailer is more honest. Reynaud's book is a mass of assertions or quick reviews like his 500-word caricature of Judaeo-Christian patriarchy. I eventually threw the book at my shaving cream and went off to play sport (both activities frowned upon in this book).

It really is incredible. How can a French author write about gender and sexuality with no reference to Foucault or Deluze? How can Britain's largest radical publisher miss yet another opportunity to publish a book about men written with a sense of politics and real emotion? We still have to look to the books from Gay Men's Press to find important male responses to feminist authors like Spender, Rich or Mitchell. Or read the occasional journal like *Achilles Heel*. I suggest that the £3.50 Pluto are asking for these 117 pages would be better spent on an *Achilles Heel* subscription.

David Berry

A Stranger and Afraid: Autobiography of an Intellectual

G. S. FRASER *Carcanet* £8.95

For those of us who regard the late G. S. Fraser as primarily a fine poet and critic and who, if we were to attach any label to him, would probably think in terms of man of letters, the sub-title of this autobiography of his earlier years at first comes as something of a surprise. Yet for a number of reasons it makes good sense. In the first place Fraser had a love of abstract ideas, and Sir William Empson among others has praised his ability to 'argufy' in verse. Fraser was formally trained in philosophy and always retained a keen interest in philosophical debate. After the war, during which he had served in the Middle East, he arrived in London and contemplated setting up as a reviewer of philosophical writings, only to be told by the editor of a famous literary weekly that 'if you don't know Greek and you don't know German I would leave philosophy alone'.

In the second place Fraser sometimes gave the impression of standing at some distance from life. Short-sighted, hopelessly unathletic – he has a richly comic account of the army's failure to teach him PT or even how to march – he quotes Ian Fletcher as saying to him that 'you have a frightening calm'.

In the third place *A Stranger and Afraid* suggests that Fraser always thought of poetry as being to one side of his life rather than at its centre. In pre-war Aberdeen he kept his writing pretty much to himself, and made little of the fact that London journals were beginning to carry his work. Then came the war, exile to the Middle East and the discipline of much writing for the army. It also brought with it meetings with other writers and the publication of his first volume of poetry. But that was in far-off London. After the war and with the provocation to write 'sincere occasional verse' removed from so many, 'even I, who was not an "occasional poet", felt in 1946 no immediate urge to write'. And when the urge returned it was, you are made to feel, already too late. Literary London, Tambimuttu, and what Fraser calls 'the great beer route between "The Wheatsheaf" and "The Highlander"' had intervened. Now, what with books, articles, translations and reviews, 'I had less time than I would have found if I had been doing some routine job, to devote to poetry'.

There is a wry, self-deprecatory quality to all this which suggests that Fraser saw himself as no more than a literary Jack-of-all-trades. 'An amateur' he disarmingly calls himself. Perhaps. But he was also a first-class literary journalist, an acute and generous poetry reviewer and, in my experience at least, a man who knew more about prosody and in particular metrics, than anyone else I have come across. And giving the lie to his disclaimers about himself as poet are the 16 poems which punctuate the text of this autobiography and which alone would make it worth reading.

John Lucas

DeLorean: The Rise and Fall of a Dream Maker

IVAN FALLON and JAMES SRODES *Hamish Hamilton* £8.95

When Roy Mason, the then Northern Ireland secretary, gave John DeLorean £53 million in August 1978 he had been warned that the prestige sports car project was 'an extraordinarily risky venture'. And the civil servants who negotiated the deal handed over the money without ensuring any effective control by the British government. DeLorean had told Mason what he wanted to hear: he would create 2,500 jobs in the province.

Despite continual indications that public money was being spent on a mismanaged, unviable project, and that some of that money was being misused, there was no proper investigation of DeLorean's affairs until the receiver was called in three-and-a-half years later. DeLorean paid himself and his executives huge salaries with generous perks long before his company actually started production. Millions of pounds of British taxpayers' money went to the mysterious GPD Services Inc in Geneva; Fallon and Srodes suggest some of it ended up in a personal DeLorean venture in Utah in 1979. When civil servants complained that they weren't getting the information they wanted from his company, DeLorean would just appoint a new financial director and promise to do better in future.

The press also failed to investigate him, preferring to swallow the 'unconventional ex-General Motors executive with a social conscience' image, but when it came close to it the government gave in to political lobbying and threats from DeLorean and did not pursue the matter very far. In October 1981 the Director of Public Prosecutions, Sir Thomas Hetherington, concluded that allegations of irregularities were unfounded. Two policemen had spent six days on the case before they were called off. The company was to survive another six months before going into receivership. The story of DeLorean shows how easy it is to conceal and confuse financial information; how people who should know better prefer to rely on assessments of personality rather than on rigorous analysis of hard facts.

Despite an excruciating style, presumably intended to be 'racy', Fallon and Srodes tell a gripping story. But the conclusions they draw are moralistic rather than political, as might be expected: Fallon is City Editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*. Apart from DeLorean himself, they blame unspecified British government 'watchdogs', US financial institutions and the credulity and inaccuracy of the media. Ultimately, they blame a 'world standard of morality' which stresses 'immediate reward' at the expense of 'true worth'. But this sort of pomposity is nearly meaningless; what they fail to do is to analyse the more immediate problems of why the machinery of accountability for public spending in Britain does not work.

John Rentoul

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THEATRE
Tom Vaughan

The drama of Russia

Camera Press

The most famous of Russia's elegant and comfortable theatres, the Bolshoi.

AVOIDING the folk ensembles so beloved of Intourist, I went to some kind of show almost every night on a recent visit to Russia: five in Moscow and nine in Leningrad – theatre, opera, ballet and one symphony concert. At least three of the straight theatre shows were of a quality and originality hard to rival anywhere in the world. *Old New Year's Eve* at the Moscow Arts Theatre is a contemporary play about Soviet consumerism (yes, this is actually beginning to be a problem). Two families, unknown to each other but living in the same block of flats, are shown: one, with a self-consciously 'proletarian' husband, into fridges, TVs, grand pianos and telephones; the other, the family of an 'intellectual' who is trying to opt out, living on bean-bags in a karate suit. The second act, later on New Year's Eve, on a split set, with boozer's gloom setting in and escalating family quarrels counterpointing each other, is as funny as vintage Ayckbourn.

The other two I saw in Leningrad. The first was an amazing two-part production of *The Brothers Karamazov* by final-year students at the Leningrad Academy of Drama and Kinematography. The director Arkady Katzman, a professor at the academy, elicited from his young cast performances of extraordinary brilliance and sensitivity. The production style was spare, stripped down, eloquently lit and costumed, not unlike that of Shared Experience here.

The second was *Wolves and Sheep* by Ostrovski at the Gorki Theatre under its artistic director, Georgi Tostanogov, who is rated in the USSR as at least the equal of Yuri Lyubimov of the Moscow Taganka Theatre (due to direct *Crime and Punishment* at the Lyric, Hammersmith, in the autumn). Although *Wolves and Sheep* was unknown to me (to my shame – it is considered by many Russians to be Ostrovski's masterpiece), I was spellbound throughout; and when I rushed to the library to read it on my return to England (I know no Russian) I found that there were very few of its main implications I had missed.

In this satirical examination of Russian country life in the 19th century the chief wolves are a penurious land-owner, Madame Murzavetskaya, and her crook estate manager; the chief sheep a nice local widow, Eulampe Kupavina, and Murzavetskaya's penniless niece, Glafira. In the course of the play wolves and sheep change places, the two girls hunt and catch rich husbands, Murzavetskaya is thwarted but, this being Ostrovski at his most realistic, certainly not in any way punished.

Tostanogov has framed this 19th-century jewel in a setting of the same period: the Paris Opera Comique with mustachioed conductor, drunken prompter, cod Harlequinade entr'actes with Degas shepherdess-ballerinas, a shepherd with a sheep on wheels, a Big Bad Wolf, Cupid descending on a cloud and, most deliciously in a Soviet setting, jolly collective farm girls, a heroic young tractor driver and a wicked Tartar with a big black beard. Tostanogov's repertory, I should add, also includes *Uncle Vanya, The Pickwick Club, Amadeus, Othello* and two or three modern Soviet plays.

The first opera I went to was *Mayakovski and Time*, performed by the Kirov Company from Leningrad in the home of their Moscow arch-rivals, the Bolshoi Theatre. It is a new work, written for the 90th anniversary of Mayakovski's birth, with music by Petrov and conducted by Yuri Temirkanov, the Kirov's musical director; it deals with the historical, moral and political pressures that turned Mayakovski from *enfant terrible* of early 20th-century decadence – vorticist, futurist, surrealist, Dadaist – into the revolution's greatest poet, playwright and propagandist.

The production is vivid and inventive – at one point the cast in Dada costumes (chamber-pot and aeroplane hats, artifical tits and bums) invade the audience; at others revolutionary crowds swirl about the vast stage, Tsarist brass bands countermarch; or total stillness descends, one drunken soldier accosting a lone prostitute under a distant street lamp. Petrov's music is apt and the stunning decor, climaxed by the descent from the flies of some of his famous didactic propagandist banners, is mostly by Mayakovski himself.

In a more modest way the musical *Revolutionary Studies* at the Lenin Komsomal Theatre explores an even more august revolutionary hero, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin himself, and his relationships with some of his colleagues, especially the young Red Guards, and – the production's very moving centre – with the three women in his life, his wife Krupskaya, his intellectual companion Clara Zetkin and his sister Maria Ulyanovna.

It is subtitled *Blue Horses on a Red Ground* which suggests, I imagine, that unexpected things are likely to happen, the most surprising being the complete break with the respectful hagiography of the great man we have learned to expect from films like *Lenin in October*. Vladimir Ilyich is played, not by the usual pallid lookalike, but by glamorous young television star, Oleg Jankovski, and the whole production is chirpy and cheeky and much to the taste of the young audience who are quick to mount the stage afterwards and present the cast with their little private bouquets – one rose, one carnation or a twist of wild flowers.

My last night in Leningrad was spent at *Swan Lake* at the fabulously beautiful Kirov Theatre, an experience impossible to do justice to in cold print. Across the road at the Leningrad Conservatoire Dance Theatre I saw an excellent modern ballet group dancing to Stravinksi and Pink Floyd; but I also saw, again at the Kirov, a very fusty and traditional *Rigoletto*.

While unable to give any sort of authoritative analysis on the basis of 15 days in hotels, streets and theatres, I garnered a few odd facts and impressions. Theatre seats are absurdly cheap (a seat in a stage box at the Bolshoi £1.70, a stall at the Kirov £2). Every show I went to was sold out, with queues outside (sometimes starting in the metro!) for returned tickets. There is a richness of choice (every theatre runs a repertory of 10-12 productions) and an enthusiasm and excitement which I wish existed here. The theatres are elegant and comfortable with good sight-lines. And, what is more, there is no anxiety about catching the last train; public transport operates till 2 or 3 a.m. □

Tom Vaughan is theatre critic of the Morning Star.

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FILMS
John Coleman

Look at them

Private Lives: Seven New Soviet Films
NFT, to 31 July

One of the most dispiriting items ever reported to me, a devout believer in East-West *détente* and mutual understanding as the only hope for the continuance of life on this planet, was that Norman Wisdom movies went down very big indeed in the Soviet Union. Of course, they did pretty well here too, but a world in which peoples were to unite in mirth over the antics of a cloth-capped narcissist hardly seemed on. Still, this roughly corresponded with a period when Dickens was also widely regarded over there (used – in large extracts – in primers teaching English grammar) as a sort of documentarist of the British social scene. As Ian Christie notes in the current issue of *Sight & Sound*, time's wheel has creaked on a revolution or two since then: J. B. Priestley, Shaw, Wells and Chesterton now ride high in the Soviet pantheon of EngLit greats. And such domestic exports as *Death on the Nile* and *Silver Dream Racer* are disseminating our film culture in Soviet cinemas. To see ourselves as others see us . . .

Or are allowed to. The shining virtue of a short season like the one Christie drew from his Russian trip (fast metropolitan movers may just catch most of it out on the South Bank; and it will be touring BFI-supported venues in Birmingham, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Leeds and Cardiff during the next six months) may be in the margins of artistic merit: that it lets us see the Russians as they are allowed, at the near-limits of official censorship, to see themselves. Abdrashitov's **The Train Has Stopped** (30 July), by a relative newcomer, however visually unappealing it is said to be, at least sends a detective probing a small-town cover-up after an accident and, by implication, the larger bureaucracy behind it. The kind of box-office self-flagellation common to even Stanley Kramer's melodramas of the American conscience is liable to come as a shock to Soviet audiences, as this film did. But even *Pravda* was prepared to approve the 'diagnosis' of social *malaise* tentatively present in the veteran Yuli Raizman's **Private Life**, which explores the difficult adjustments attempted by a grizzled retired managerial type towards the West-influenced new generation (jeans, pop and off-handedness), and in Ryazanov's **Station for Two** (29 July), a comedy of misprisions embodying some black-market disclosures.

Signs of a relaxation in overlordship of the arts? After all, no one in the Soviet film industry is ever about to forget that Lenin – for various reasons – gave it priority: cinema was 'for us, the most important' and Ian Christie found this dictum 'emblazoned' (his emphatic word) wherever he went round studios and picture-palaces. It strikes me that those at once interested in Kremlin-watching and rather good movies might profit most from a sustained look at Gleb Panfilov's **Vassa** (also 29 July), a handsome rehabilitation of Gorky's 1910 play about the imperious and matriarchal boss of a shipping empire. A rule-of-thumb is that totalitarian régimes enforce puritanism, notably in the anarchic area of sex. But past history, the pre-Revolutionary stuff, gets an odd and maybe unguarded dispensation: all right to show the unreconstructed *haute bourgeoisie* as deliriously deviant. Casting his strong, Modigliani-faced wife Inna Churikova as the 40-ish tycoon Gorky intended, with a feeling for family ('My children are my hands, my grandchildren are my fingers') but little spare time to apply it usefully, Panfilov wilily summons the neglected kinsfolk into startling life. Their erotic dilemmas and drunken parties represent an astonishing walk on the wild side in anyone's cinema, a liberating escape from – as it were – received Wisdom. □

TELEVISION
Mary Harron

All our fantasies

THE A-TEAM, ITV's new comedy and violence show, is already a hit in America and is likely to become a cult here. The first episode was a 90-minute special which combined (with that lurid enthusiasm only Americans can muster) every blockbuster movie and TV adventure series in living memory into a single package. And it did so brilliantly; the politics that underlie this story of a group of Vietnam veterans turned desperadoes may be dangerous, but it's an exhilarating show to watch.

Friday's episode changed genres every five minutes, but it opened in Clint Eastwood territory, as a group of beastly, sweating Mexican bandits terrorised a hapless village. 'Please, *jefe*, we are just poor farmers', cringed the village leader as the bandit chief cackled maniacally, rolled his eyes and threatened to rape the man's granddaughter. The dialogue was familiar from a thousand spaghetti Westerns; it seemed pathetically crude, until you realised this was conscious parody. Like so many recent B-movies, this is authentic pulp entertainment satirising pulp entertainment: the utmost stylistic sophistication with a plot guaranteed to appeal to any nine-year-old.

After the bandits kidnap a visiting American journalist, the focus suddenly switches to *Lou Grant*. In a Los Angeles news room cub reporter Amy Andrews (winningly played by Melinda Culea) attacks her editor for refusing to rescue the missing journalist. Unlike *Lou Grant*, this is a realistic portrayal of a newspaper editor, and he tells her to get lost. She decides to contact the A-Team for help, in a search that takes us through *Chinatown, One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* and *Jaws*, with a side-long look at *Dallas*.

I won't bore you with any more references. What matters is that the A-Team, when we meet them, are classic Hollywood good-bad guys, desperadoes and loveable con-men, who have been forced outside the system. (Framed, in fact, for a robbery they didn't commit.). As characters they could have been computer-programmed to appeal to a general audience: one cigar chomping, witty patriarch (George Peppard), one charming young hustler with a tragic past (Tim Dunigan), and one black strong-man with a punk Mohican and disco necklace (the legendary Mr T.) who combines brute power with a brooding nobility and a self-help ethic. And one lunatic: the pilot, Murdock (Dwight Schultz), who is locked in a mental home, none too happily! 'Don't you think I want to get out of here and see *ET* just like everyone else?'

They are all Vietnam veterans. The gradual assimilation of Vietnam into acceptable popular mythology, which began solemnly with *The Deer Hunter*, has reached its culmination with *The A-Team:* no longer a memory to be hurriedly brushed aside, but heroes of a network adventure show. Their enemy is a comic army officer, Col. Lynch – see *Sgt. Bilko*, see *Beetle Bailey*, see *Mash* – whose pursuit of our heroes is doomed to slapstick failure. This is classic right-wing American populism – patriotic, macho, anti-authority – and is unlikely to be understood in Britain, where to be right-wing implies an obsequiousness towards officers and the status quo. But right-wing this series certainly is. The bandits, it turns out, are in league with a group of sinister guerrillas who are trying to destabilise the country. However, thanks to the A-Team's hearts and minds policy, the villagers rise up and put them to rout – in a 20-minute series of comic-book battle scenes, over-turning cars and airplane stunt-tricks, in which not a single person is hurt.

America sailed to Vietnam on a sea of comic-book fantasies, and this is how she wishes it had turned out. The dreams are being re-written, at the worst possible moment, as she drifts towards a Central American war. The saddest thing is that America encourages her people to go to war by playing on their better instincts: heroism, rescuing the down-trodden, being Errol Flynn. Vietnam hurt so deep that personally I've never believed they could whip up popular fervour for El Salvador. However, *The A-Team* is a significant fantasy. There's a new generation of young men watching television now; and as the polls show the vast majority of Americans don't know which side is which in Central America, they won't be well equipped for telling the good guys from the bad.

Media manipulation, in a most novel form, was the theme of Howard Schuman's comedy **Bouncing Back** (ITV). Four depressives, including Eleanor Bron and John Gordon-Sinclair (of *Gregory's Girl*) were cured by a sinister young psychiatrist with a

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programme of 'Light Entertainment Therapy'. That is, their egos were temporarily revived by their pretending to be television stars. This was an excuse for a deft series of television parodies: the timing was perfect, the performances admirable and all the really important questions about television versus reality simply left hanging.

Earlier in the evening such problems were played out for real in **Mothervision** (BBC-1), part of the *Everyman* series, which told the story of Mother Angelica who founded the world's first Catholic cable TV station. She revealed an almost chilling talent for projecting her homey personality on chat shows and 60-second 'prayer spots'. Asked what a contemplative was doing as a TV star she replied serenely: 'I've asked God about that – but He's done it, so it's all right.' The programme introduced a delicate – and necessary – note of scepticism throughout.

And finally, the first episode of **Motives** (BBC-2), in which George Best bared what he could of his soul to Dr Anthony Clare, has been harshly reviewed – I found it rivetting. □

THEATRE
Benedict Nightingale

Bad times

Smile Orange
TREVOR RHONE *Tricycle*
Rococo *ICA*

The work of West Indian dramatists, or rather of British dramatists of West Indian origin, has been getting wintrier of late; and understandably so. The presence of Mustapha Matura, all Viva Zapata moustache and genial, bony charisma, in the first-night audience at the Tricycle seemed an apt reminder of this glum evolution. What fun he gave us in *As Time Goes By* and *Play Mas*, and what fun he conscientiously failed to provide in *Welcome Home, Jacko*, his picture of restless, rootless, workless youth; and where the finest of our black dramatists has led, others have followed, capping gloom with gloom. Where you might once have found an unabashed (though not uncritical) celebration of West Indian culture, you now tend to get the theatrical equivalent of survival-kits, embattled guides to living and partly living in a mainly hostile Babylon.

Smile Orange, deriving (as it does) from Jamaica and the late Sixties, is an indication of what once was and could conceivably be again, even here, in decaying Britain. Not that it is, all seeming to the contrary, an altogether frivolous entertainment. 'As a black man you have to learn to play a part; if you can't play a part, you starve to death': that is the message relayed by Ringo, who has a good, lucrative job as a hotel waiter, to his male skivvy, who is one of 11 children, hies from rural poverty and, given the strenuous hobble and lisp with which Rufus Collins's production kits him out, might almost be a tropical Smike. Half-visible behind the fun, the laughter, the ghostly cut-outs of tourists littering the set, and the rest of it, this is a hard, unfunny world, in which only the unscrupulous, the ruthless are likely to flourish.

But there *is* laughter, there *is* fun, not least in seeing someone as appallingly unscrupulous as Ringo flourish. He fleeces and cheats his wife, seduces the wife of the officious under-manager, wangles sex and money from impressionable guests, exploits his fellow-servants and, as a sort of grisly climax, manages to make a hero of himself by pretending (and failing) to rescue the hapless American for whose drowning he is mainly responsible, having inveigled a non-swimming friend into the post of hotel lifeguard. He is everything decent people should disapprove of; but also everything that winks and grins and bounces at the back of our minds when most of us think of rules, authority and those other things that keep the human animal tamed. *Smile Orange* is not an excellent farce, for all its reputation in the West Indies. There is too much reportage of comic events offstage, too strongly accented to be easily comprehensible. But it has an energy, a verve, a sheer brazen *wickedness* that I realise I have been badly missing in recent years.

Performance art – and I suppose the work of Rational Theatre, as the group at the ICA quaintly calls itself, may be categorised under that somewhat charmless title – tends to do much more for the eye of the spectator than for the grey stuff seething behind it. That does not necessarily matter. In fact, it is only a minus point when a show's visual invention is skimpy, monotonous or otherwise inadequate or when its intellectual aspirations are pretentious or meretricious. Unluckily, all these objections may be levelled against **Rococo**, which, so the publicity tells us, 'reveals the self-obsessed indulgence of a future, leisured society. Their courtly games and intrigues mask a desperate inability, in the face of present paranoia and impending holocaust, to save themselves.'

That seems a bit over the top. What we actually get is a number of painted toffs, male and female, in wigs that have escalated spectacularly. They make moues, swap leaden banalities, mince and squeal in front of mirrors, and play effete and narcissistic games with one another, reserving their more destructive attentions for a girl Candide discovered at the beginning cultivating her garden. She is dressed in a silken map of planet earth, and has a schoolroom globe daintily perched on her head; and, thus rather literally transformed into a Miss World of the Restoration period, she is successfully educated in the twin arts of massaging her own ego and murdering other peoples. Give or take a motorised chaise-longue and the odd other visual distraction, that is all there is to the evening; and I have to say it didn't leave me feeling ravished, or excited, or told anything very central about our own society, let alone about the societies of the future. □

PHOTOGRAPHY
Liz Heron

Starting place

Committing Photography
SU BRADEN *Pluto* £4.95

Photography enjoyed a boom during the Seventies, when both the medium and its individual exponents were acquiring new status. Substantial official funding encouraged an effloresence of social documentary work – a process frequently allied to community activism and the emerging cultural politics of the Left and the women's movement. It was an exciting but shortlived period; by the end of the decade funding was shrinking, and confidence with it. 'Engaged' photography suffered a crisis of direction, itself the theme of an exhibition, 'Restricted Practices', at the ICA last year.

Su Braden's overview of radical and community-based photography draws largely on research carried out in the Seventies, and unfortunately just misses some encouraging new developments. As an inquiry it is out of synch. with the current mood. Yet its usefulness is undeniable. Precisely because of their marginal character, many of the projects and initiatives it catalogues are little known beyond their communities of interest or locality, and their inclusion affirms their significance and ensures that they won't be lost.

A large number of photographs are reproduced, both from contemporary and historical sources, and there is sustained comparison of how the camera has been used at different times with philanthropic and reforming intent or as an instrument of change controlled by those whose interests it represents, rendering *their* viewpoint. This leads to some illuminating investigation of methods and strategies within the latter approach – the Film and Poster Collective tackling sexism and imperialism in close consultation with activist groups; Peter Dunn and Loraine Leeson working with the East London Health Project. Su Braden argues for this fidelity of collaboration as an essential condition of a 'socialist aesthetic'.

In a book of such broad scope, which attempts to chronicle and to analyse, to explore the ways in which images are constructed and in turn construct our view of reality, it is perhaps inevitable that there should be errors of fact and omission. Yet these lapses, together with the author's tendency to fit her theoretical arguments too readily to evidence that is only fleetingly considered, do limit the value of the book. All the more reason to regret the absence of a reading list, or clear references for the publications quoted in the text. Enquiring readers will have to do their own research. But this is still a good place to start. □

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MUSIC
Andrew Clements

Key figure

Psalm IV Trilogy
St Bartholomew's/Radio 3
Babylon the Great is Fallen
Albert Hall/Radio 3

Anyone who contemplates a chronicle of contemporary British music must confront the problem of Alexander Goehr. It's no exaggeration to place Goehr at the centre of developments since 1950, not only as a considerable composer in his own right, but as inspirer and catalyst of countless others, from Birtwistle and Maxwell Davies through Holloway to those still in their twenties. Teasing out the ramifications of this influence will make one task for the historian; coming to terms with the development of his music will be another, more profound one.

Putting simplistic constructions on his progress – from ardent Schoenbergian, through a style that mediated serialism by a concern for harmonic literacy, to a position, in the 1970s, when his music appeared to be trying out a variety of stylistic masks – is tempting. Goehr was born and bred within the nexus of the Second Viennese School; his father was a pupil of Schoenberg and championed his music as a conductor when the family came to England. Some might say that a reaction against parental values was inevitable, the only surprise being that the composer was nearly 40 before he made the break.

Had Goehr simply exchanged the role of radical for that of reactionary that argument might have carried conviction. That he is firmly a member of the musical establishment now is unquestionable – a member of the board of the Royal Opera House and professor of music at Cambridge could hardly be otherwise – but his musical explorations seem to me too intense, too fiercely structured, to be passed off as the refuge of a composer who has opted for the easy life. There is nothing facile about Goehr's recent music; the problems it presents its listeners may be of a different kind from those of his earlier work but they are no less exacting.

The concert by Richard Hickox and the City of London Sinfonia in the St Bartholomew's Festival presented three of Goehr's works of the late 1970s as the trilogy they are; last Monday's Prom revived the gigantic choral work he wrote for the BBC five years ago. There's no doubt that the **Psalm IV** trilogy made the more rewarding listening. If any single achievement of Goehr's justifies his 'time-travelling' it is this, for it seems to me as beautiful as anything he has written, with a directness of expression and quite new economy.

Psalm IV began as a setting of the psalm text, intended for a memorial service in 1976. It uses the plainchant for Psalm IV, which appears first sung by women's voices against a counter-melody. It is restated by a solo viola and organ, then taken up in canonic form by solo soprano and contralto; this three-part structure is then repeated eight times with slight modifications to make up the work.

It generates a hieratic, impersonal mood, not far from the late choral works of Stravinsky. Yet there seems to be less self-conscious artifice in Goehr's work, no conflict between the strictly imposed form and the modal musical language; both seem perfectly matched to the text they set.

After he finished the setting, the material haunted Goehr, and he soon afterwards completed two more instrumental works on the same material – the *Fugue on the Notes of Psalm IV* for 15 strings, and the *Romanza on the Notes of Psalm IV* for two violins, two violas and string orchestra. The figure is as austere as the psalm itself, using three of its themes.

Yet the result is seamless where the vocal work is rigorously sectional; extremes of emotion are avoided, the music proceeds on its intricately measured course without pausing for breath. Nothing in contemporary music is quite like this, in its fresh harmonic usages, its freedom from dogmatic constructivism. The *Romanza* carries on the organic process, ever elaborating the original with more counterpoint and sometimes dissolving into unashamed diatonicism; the strict organisation of the psalm underpins it all, but now there is a luxuriant growth of figuration, as the pair of violins detach themselves from the rest and follow an independent course.

WHERE *Psalm IV's* great strength is its lack of contrivance, **Babylon the Great** fails because of its self-imposed constraints. Goehr set out to write something that amateur singers could master and seems to have fallen too easily into the gestural vocabulary of the choral tradition. The text – four passages from the Bible that 'were among those especially noted by the Post-Reformation prophets of violent revolution' – are set up and demolished; the result is unremittingly pessimistic, a litany of false hopes and empty Utopias. Yet had Goehr's music struck the right questioning, critical note, the 50-minute work might have succeeded. Far too little could be identified as the work of one of our leading composers; it is bland and featureless, a miscalculation of epic proportions. What is more disturbing is that the Babylon choruses are planned to be part of an evening-long work on the Anabaptists; these four movements will be the framework.

When Goehr's music is in such a current state of flux – a more recent orchestral work explored the language of late 19th-century symphonism – perhaps a single failure is less important. It's unfortunate however, that he should have failed on such a large and public canvas. □

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 2781 **Set by F. R. Spofforth**

By special request of Muir and Norden, we have decided to give you a double dactyl comp. On the only previous occasion when this was set, more than five years ago, it was a great success; so make an effort. The rules are strict: two quatrains, the last lines of which rhyme; all the lines (except the truncated rhyming ones) are composed of two dactyls. The first line is a nonsense-phrase ('Higgledy-piggledy', 'Rookery-nookery' or whatever); the second consists of a double-dactylic name (Heliogabolus, Jacqueline Kennedy and so forth); and somewhere in the second stanza, preferably in the antepenultimate line, there is a line consisting of a single word. Subject matter (as with the clerihew) is of a biographical-historical-critical nature. To make matters clear, here's an example:

Higgledy-piggledy
Dorothy Richardson
Wrote a huge book with her
Delicate muse

Where (though I hate to seem
Uncomplimentary)
Nothing much happens and
Nobody screws.

Clear? Up to four shots each, by 12 August.

No 2778 **Set by Toby Jugge**

Yarns, as perfected by Frank Muir and Denis Norden in *My Word!*, on one of the following phrases: Your tiny hand is frozen; But soft, what light from yonder window breaks?; The quality of mercy is not strained; Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?; The darling buds of May; Every cloud has a silver lining.

Report **By Frank Muir and Denis Norden**

A large and diverse entry. Perhaps entrants were mentally laundered by hearing the *My Word!* broadcasts on chaste Radio 4 but there was an astonishing absence of the customary political references and honest intellectual filth. The majority of punters chose to manipulate the 'quality of mercy' line, and many a play was made with the words 'Mersey' (a river), 'collie' (as with dogs) and 'colly' (as in cauliflower).

In many cases a good twist on the chosen line was let down by a poorish story, or a good story was marred by a pun so remote from the line as to be baffling (which of the given lines, do you suppose, was bent into 'Never bowed, and the livers flying'?). With both these faults we are familar and wholly sympathetic. Another desperate ploy, with which we are both only too familar, is the invention of some outlandish name in order to make the line work. From the inscrutable East we learned of an Indonesian ('Your Thai Nee Hant'), who was possibly a cousin

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of a Chinaman ('The Quali tea of Mah-See'), who was clearly a blood relation of a poor Chinese songwriter ('Your tie, Nee Han'). And from West Berlin we learned of a motor-scooter enthusiast ('Your tiny Honda is, Frau Zehn').

Altogether, though, a feast of invention, with many items leaving us grinding our teeth in envy that we had not got there first.

Jeff Squiffy adds: Each of the winners below will get five Newtons plus a copy of the definitive volume of Muir-Norden stories, *The Complete and Utter My Word! Collection*, donated by those distinguished sponsors of the arts, Methuen.

A few years ago, to escape from all the forced bonhomie and that favourite opening conversation piece, our British climate, I took myself Downunder for the duration of the so-called 'Festive Season'. On a par with the full-rigged concrete Sydney schooner, another ghastly sight marred the trip. In the outback, whenever I managed to squint through my hat-dangling corks, blue gums (the vegetable variety) could be seen, each and every one of which was coated with an unsavoury green slime: they looked like members of a punk-rock group. To my unscientific mind, the coating was surely something essential for the plants' well-being. However, when recently I, with about a million others, visited Bootle Zoo, the truth was revealed. There, on the third turning left past the giraffe-house, was a small enclosure containing a magnificent specimen of the blue gum. Cuddly little Aussie bear-like marsupials were munching away the leaves but to my astonishment there was no sign of what I had thought of as essential green stuff. This prompted me to approach a keeper to ask if he could explain why this blue gum differed from those in Australia. 'Ah,' he said, 'we potty-train our furry little friends so that *the koala tree of Mersey is not stained.*'

FRANK ANDERSON

Even as a child, James Watt was peculiarly sensitive to cold. The only way he could soothe the chilblains that afflicted every extremity of his person was by holding them in the steam of the kettle constantly simmering on the kitchen hob – and it was this enforced proximity that triggered off his precocious discoveries of the propulsive properties of steam. Later, the strict teetotalism of his family prevented his resorting to the Scot's traditional buffer against the frost – half a gallon of Scotch slopping round the system at any given moment. Both his shivers and his abstinence exposed him to 'effeminate' sneers – and it was only when, in his forties, he was working in Prussia that he found, in the superbly insulated fleecy trousers favoured by the young landowners, a nether garment capable of totally repelling the chill. His moment of triumph came at a freezing outdoor occasion of the Royal Society of Edinburgh where *he* glowed while all around him teeth chattered. 'Ye puir fuddled sinfu, gomerils ha' to be lit up wi' pestilential whusky,' he gloated, *'but saft Watt's lit from Junker winter breeks!'*

MARTIN FAGG

I was eight when I realised women were different from men. It hit me as I watched Auntie Doris running after the milkman. From behind she looked like an inverted windmill in a frock. Instead of her legs simply moving back and forth like a man's, they made circular detours. I asked my mother the reason for this and she said she would tell me when I was 21. She must have forgotten.

I assume that whatever it is that causes women to 'run funny' also prevents them from marching properly. Whenever women march, they either put both legs forward together, or else swing both limbs on the same side in the same direction. As for keeping straight ranks . . .

Imagine my astonishment then, whilst on holiday in Ireland, to see the Kilkenny Majorettes. Could those girls march! They had precision like most teenagers have acne. Their drill was perfect and despite the complexity of their manoeuvres, they kept their rows absolutely straight. Remarkable. The other remarkable feature of the Kilkenny Majorettes was that every single one of them was called Clodagh.

As I watched their breathtaking display I got chatting to a local and asked him how often the girls practised their routine.

'They don't need no practice,' he replied.

'But their marching is perfect,' I exclaimed. 'They couldn't keep straighter rows if they were computerised.'

'It's an innate ability they have, sir,' said the local. *'Every Clodagh's self-aligning.'*

V. ERNEST COX

'Yes, cricket's not the game it was,' said the groundsman, shaking his head pensively. The pipe clenched in his teeth swung slowly from side to side, like a long-remembered signal for four. 'Flannels, that's what I miss. Proper flannels.

They aren't flannel any more, they're synthetic – polly something or other. Polly Ethel. It's all bright white instead of cream, plastic instead of wood. I remember the days when it were, were . . . graceful, like. A gentleman's game. We used to have some proper gents here at Nottinghamshire. There were two brothers I recall, Brian and Tom Waller. We knew them as Waller B. and Waller T. Like as two peas in a pod, they were: green, and roundish. Lovely players. I think they'd learnt the game on Merseyside before coming here. Waller B. went off to Australia, of course, but Waller T. stayed on. "My brother may be making more money down there," I remember him saying, "He may be clever, and I may be thick. But *thick Waller T. of Mersey is Notts trained!*" '

J. C. LAMB

'How went your travels in France?'

'To speak the truth I found them most confusing.'

'How so?'

'Well, we were walking through the streets when a sickly man came tottering out of the crowd towards us. Obviously the worse for poverty; you know what these paupers are. Absolutely no control. Passed out on the pavement. Of course, I was all for having the fellow arrested but my companions cried, "No, m'sieur. Leave him; he is one of our leading poets!" '

'Really?'

'Another day we went into a busy café where we were accosted by a rolling drunkard. Again my companions urged me to take no action. "Have pity, m'sieur," they said. "He is one our leading poets!" Some days later we joined a press of people in the market when a chap started ranting on about what a rat he was and how it was all going to be different in the future. Had to be led into a cool church. You know what my companion said?'

' "He is one of our leading poets, m'sieur!"?'

'Exactly. In France it seems *every crowd has this ill Verlaine in.*'

JAN RUT-BROWN

When Captain Ahab was out pacing his upper decks on the Pequod, or generally giving a glum stare up the mizzen-mast at his crow's nest, he was apt to do a spot of spouting himself. There's nothing like the doldrums on a Moby Dick cruise for bearding an eager Ishmael and dictating your general drift. It's a captain's prerogative to lecture his livelier cabin-lads. 'Avast, me heartie!' he would cry in an avuncular fashion when saluted by Ishmael round by the foc's'le. And Ishmael, quite naturally for a boy who'd later change his name to Melville and write a rip-roaring best-seller, wanted inside information. Local colour. Human interest. Tips for the Nantucket novice *et cetera*. Like, for instance, what do you do when you've worked out where the blessed thing blows? Stick a big rod over the side? To such innocent questions, kindly old Ahab had a simple response. He'd fix young Ishy with a fishy squint, take him firmly by his bell-bottoms, and teach him a thing or two. Harpoons for one. How could even a gigantic rod support the sort of hook you'd need? 'But what about bait?' persisted the lad, looking at his Captain. 'D'you bung a wee shark over the side on a rope, or tempt him with a sizeable, top-class trout fly, or what?' The lad's daft, thought Ahab, as he hissed:

'Who breaks a better fly upon a whale?'

WILL BELLENGER

In 1879, a young Eskimo fell in love with that inteprid, but ironically enough, rather homely Polar explorer, Miss Joan Huntingdon-Smythe, and asked her to marry him. To his surprise (after all, we all look alike to Eskimos) she accepted eagerly.

On the morning after their wedding night, he awoke to find her gone for ever. Imagine, if you will, his humiliation when he went outside to behold the message she had so carefully carved in large letters in the snow and ice on the outer wall of his abode, for all the world to see:

'YOU'RE TINY, AND IT'S FROZEN.'

DEREK BARNARD

I'm feeling very low these days. Nutt'n I do seems to go like it should. My boss is coming down real heavy lately and tells me 'work harder or get the hell out'. And my girl, Angie, acts like I'm something the cat dragged out the ash can. She says why can't I earn some real dough. She tells me about these guys down in Bud's Bar who really know how to give a girl a good time. Well, I know how they get to be so heeled – they're mostly pushing the stuff on the street and they're stashing dough away in real estate and stuff like that. They never talk to me – like to them I'm nothing, but they talk to Angie all right – and boy, don't she love it?

So I'm left sitting up at the bar with a rye and coke trying to look cool. But there's one good thing. This cute lady who serves at the bar is really sympathetic and I know it's not just to sell booze – she tells me I've got nice eyes and she can't understand why I can't make it with Angie. So now I'm getting myself hyped up to ask this lady to come and hear my hi-fi. 'Cos even if I can't get to first base with Angie I think maybe with *the doll in Bud's I may.*

KEN RUDGE

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FIRST PERSON

Bill Greenwell

Flashes of horror

EVEN IF you like having your photo taken and not for nothing is it called a mug-shot, there is no institution quite so unprepossessing as the booth to which one repairs for a handy quic-pic or fast-foto.

You know the form. The call of foreign climes requires the passport you thought you had, but hadn't; some minor bureaucrat requires a human face to fit your print; or a pen-pal wants some further evidence of your existence, and the last time you were lounging around in front of a lense it looked as if you had three heads – whatever. Either you pay a professional to tart up your image for the last precious pounds cluttering up your current account, or else you opt for a do-it-yourself. There is, after all, some absurd security in the fiction that, when you enter a booth to be blinded four times, you are actually snapping yourself. Now you proceed to the place particular to your town, and the protracted agony begins.

There is a queue. You shuffle casually past, and take advantage of the café which always seems to be handily nearby. It is full of faces shaping themselves while the coffee slops on the table. Fifteen minutes tick away before you idly retrace your footsteps, finding that the queue has evaporated, only to be replaced by a knot of babbling nine-year-olds, passing a strip of images from smudged finger to smudgier thumb. Behind the booth, there is someone adjusting their hair in frantic silence (ah, so there *is* a queue!). And in the booth, on the operating stool itself, there is an unseen bum, from which protrude a pair of desperately anonymous legs.

What you glimpse is the substance of a nightmare. In a casual instant, you are at one with the rest of the human race. Someone you have never met – please God, let this at least be the case! – is wriggling internally as you will soon be doing. They are coping with a confined space, with the public adjustment of dress, the fumbling for the correct coinage, the practice of a smile that may all too soon be frozen into a smirk, the angling of the head.

There are decisions. One large photo? Too risky. Probably too big, too. Four of the same? Faster out, but same element of uncertainty. Turn the dial to four. Finger the florins, address oneself to the red light and smile FLASH, look in another direction FLASH, pick up the coin you dropped no there's no time FLASH, sit back and FLASH, how many flashes was that – three? – wait wait wait. No, it's finished. Now get out, double quick.

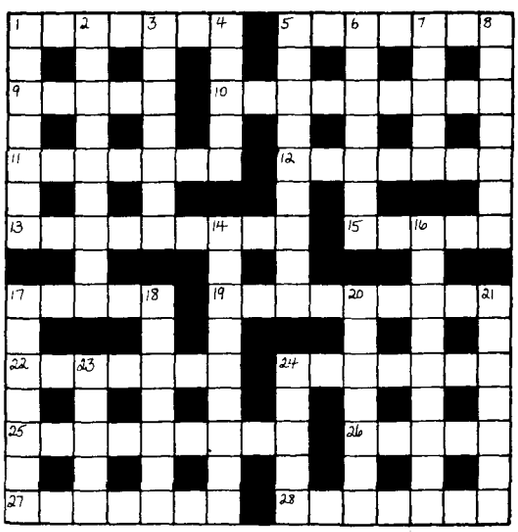
The vicarious experience is more acute even than the actual. Never in one's life is one so acutely conscious of *legs*; and yet these must support you for four further minutes as you loiter mock-absently for the end-product. The most remarkable experience once occurred to me while suffering pangs just such as these. The legs in evidence were old. They shook, as did the gnarled hand which arthritically grasped a scarf, fingered the appropriate cash. I watched in horror as the flashes came and went. And the legs remained – over them, so I now saw, a coat. The man within the booth had had to undress! And yet now, as the queue scuffed its feet in the usual mixture of impatience and alarm, the man remained, staring (one assumed) at his dim reflection. Plainly he assumed that the photographs were issued inside. But there was nobody, nobody who would shift an inch to tell him.

The minutes solidified. And then, suddenly but slowly, the legs were upright. The coat and scarf were swathed unseen on the inmate of the booth. Finally he emerged, blinking, an aged man with a shock of white hair and a ruined face. His strip of images popped into its position at the same time. He picked them up, oblivious to all except the pictures.

They had frozen him. They had arrested the shiver of his head and neck. He was looking at an image of sheer magnificence, the absolute lie of an unseen camera that had restored all his self-respect. For once, for a moment, the booth had been benign. □

Weekend Crossword 1409

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1409, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 9 August.



Name_____

Address_____

ACROSS

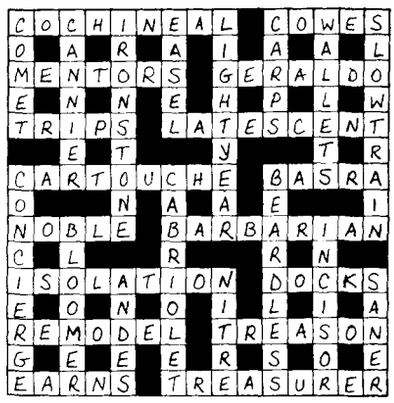
1. Here is where to put key on cover (7)
5. Where one has to eat food sparingly (7)
9. Branches of learning are backward without universal piece of literature (5)
10. Foreigner from a north-western region (9)
11. Time spent in performances by a pop group (7)
12. Objects to direction by a junior officer in RAF missions (7)
13. Country place is remote and surrounded by the opposite of a large number (5,4)
15. Dress with decoration worn in the centre (5)
17. He knows the price of everything and the value of nothing (5)
19. Lord has to walk on the sea (9)
22. Take too much, having the middle of the meal in public (7)
24. Players with guts (7)
25. Capital weight for a schoolmaster (9)
26. Behead a man with time to make a likeness (5)
27. Rugby's version of game and set (7)
28. Desire taking a girl to heart, looking most exuberant (7)

DOWN

1. Treated improperly, but regretted if heartless (7)
2. Chemical process used when there is a bird on the allotment (9)
3. Speech is golden to a politican (7)
4. College which has relationship with school (5)
5. Through an earlier exponent (9)
6. Show enthusiasm about return of relative, although not so dear (7)
7. 'Had I as many sons as I have ----' (Macbeth) (5)
8. Disadvantages of us being kept in the underground (7)
14. Astronaut has to prepare the mighty for war (9)
16. Touch of genius reveals a garment in water (9)
17. Prepare something for a picnic by the Thames (7)
18. Torch which breaks secrets (7)
20. The missus and I moved and we live alone (7)
21. An indefinite number on the way up are coming into existence (7)
23. Remove from the water as everyone looks worried (5)
24. Period of magic (5)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1407



Prizewinners to 1407

A. J. Bryan (Deptford SE8)
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HANDSOME BLACK man, 25, reading Law, wishes meet well-built girl, 18-30, for friendship/love, any nationality, small photo and tel. number appreciated. Box 6314.

LONDON. Two young men seek two socialist girls to discuss life soon. Box 6298.

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Services

SDP/LIB volunteers required to work with the *Centre Party in NW London. Tel: 01-459 6828.*

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LISTINGS

FRI 29 JULY

LONDON TO GREENHAM Women's walk for Peace and Disarmament. As well as walkers they need a bus and driver. **Org Women for Life on Earth 01-699 6712.**

LONDON TO GREENHAM Women for Life on Earth Star Marches 1983. **Details 01-699 6712/01-701 4566.** Marches will converge on Greenham from all over the country on Hiroshima Day, 6 August. **For details of other marches: London Greenham Office, 5 Leonards Street EC2. 01-251 3133.**

LONDON 'How to win London for Labour' Conf 10.30-5.45 County Hall SE1. Creche on demand. **Details London Labour Co-ordinating Committee 01-969 2240/01-471 1637.**

SAT 30 JULY

LONDON Jumble Sale, 2pm. The Marchmont Centre, Marchmont St, WC1. Adm 10p/5p OAPs. **Org North London Women's Group, BM Box 4835, WC1N 3XX.**

LONDON Celebration of 30th Anniversary of Assault on Moncada Barracks and 200th Anniversary of the birth of Simon Bolivar 3pm Bolivar Statue, Belgrave Sq, SW1. Songs, poems and flowers from Latin Americans in London. 5-11pm Events at County Hall, SE1. Colombian film on Bolivar. Meeting spkrs incl Robin Blackburn on Bolivar, Luis Palacio, Cuban Embassy, Representative of FMLN-FDR. Bar, food, stalls, exhibitions. Adm £1/50p unwaged. **Org Britain-Cuba Resource Centre, 29 Islington Park Street 01-607 2747 ext 277.**

MON 1 AUGUST

LONDON Women's meeting to express solidarity with sisters in Holloway prison. 6-7pm outside the prison, Parkhurst Rd, N7 (first day of every month thereafter).

CARLISLE Launch of Cumbrian 'Freeze' 7.30pm Methodist Central Hall, Fisher Street. Spkr Bruce Kent Org Cumbrians for Peace. **Details Charles Searle Carlisle 46370.**

TUES 2 AUGUST

LONDON Public Forum 'Fight Newman's Attack on Democratic Rights'. 7.30pm Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton, SW2. **Org South London Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! BM Box 4835, London, WC1N 3XX.**

WED 3 AUGUST

LONDON 'The Labour Party and Interest Groups' 7.30pm 178 Whitechapel Rd, E1. Spkr David Marsh. **Org Tower Hamlets Fabian Society.**

THURS 4 AUGUST

LONDON 'Useful work versus useless toil' 8pm at The Prince Albert, Wharfdale Rd, King's Cross, N1. Spkr Vic Vanni on the social organisation of labour as it is and as it could be. Adm Free. **Org. Socialist Party of Great Britain, 52 Clapham High St, SW4. 01-622 3811.**

FRI 5 AUGUST

IRELAND Delegation from Troops Out Movement. Details Delegation Organising Committee PO Box 353, London NW5. **01-250 1293.**

SAT 6 AUGUST

LIVERPOOL *Solemn Procession in commemoration* of Hiroshima. **Details: Merseyside CND c/o Unity, Hope Place, Liverpool 1. 051-709 4988.**

LOUGHBOROUGH Hiroshima Day Anniversary Silent Vigil in Churchgate 2pm. Peace Picnic in Southfields Park from 2.30pm. **Details: Loughborough CND, 20 Forest Road, Loughborough, Leics. 0602 218150.**

LONDON Hiroshima day of Remembrance – day long programme of events. 12-6pm Covent Garden Piazza. Poetry Theatre and readings from James Cameron, Bob Cryer, Ivor Cutler, *Adrian Mitchell, Roger Woddis.* 7.30pm St. James's Church, 197 Piccadilly, W1. Hiroshima Day Concert for CND. Bach, Vivaldi, Mozart and 3 commissioned works by Eric Boat, Oliver Knussen and Colin Matthews. Adm £3/£2 in gallery/£1 unwaged (in gallery). **Tickets from CND shop, 227 Seven Sisters Rd, N4. 01-263 5673 or by post from London CND, 6 Endsleigh St, WC1.**

DUNDEE Hiroshima Day March and Rally. **Details: Scott Wilson, Dundee CND, 78 Bridge St, St Andrews, Fife.**

SUN 7 AUGUST

LONDON Sponsored Walk 'Save the GLC'. Assemble outside Trades Hall, Bruce Grove, Tottenham, N17. Walk to County Hall. **Org Bruce Grove Branch, Tottenham Labour Party. Sponsor forms/info Roger Harris 01-801 4951 eves.**

FORTHCOMING

11 AUGUST London 'African Philosophy Today' Prof. Paulin Hountondji. 6.30pm at Africa Centre 38 King St. Adm 50p/membs free.

20 AUGUST Leicester Disarming Arguments – a day workshop on improving techniques of debate and discourse against the bomb, 9.30-5.30pm Students' Union Building, University of Leicester. Adm £1/50p unwaged. **Details Leicester CND, 35 Friar Lane, Leicester 0533-57228.**

27 AUGUST *Porton Down.* Picnic celebration of Life. **Contact Porton Down Action Group, Box 100 C/O 143 Charing Cross Road, London, WC2. 01-734 2691.**

4 SEPT London Holly Near performs for Chile at Her Majesty's Theatre, Haymarket. (7th Sept Town Hall, Leeds, 8th Sept Guild Hall, Cambridge.) **Details Bill McClellan 01-272 4298.**

9-11 SEPT Brighton CND Skill Sharing Weekend workshop Lansdowne Centre. Creche, overnight accomo. available. £8/£5 unwaged. **Details: Delia Warnes, Basement Flat, 22 Gladstone Pl, Brighton. 0273 672545.**

9-11 SEPT Oxford Weekend Workshop of Adlerian Soc. of Great Britain 'Life Tasks for 1984' at St. Hilda's College. **Details: 11 Osborne House, 414 Wimbledon Park Rd, SW19 6PW. 01-789 8066.**

17-18 SEPT Glasgow Working Conference called by Polish Solidarity Committee to discuss 'Democratic forms of social organisation in Czechoslovakia 1968 and Poland 1980-81; 'The peace movements in Eastern Europe; 'Situation of women in Eastern Europe'; 'Developing solidarity with the people of Eastern Europe'. **Details Gordon Morgan, 59 Durward Ave, Glasgow G41 041-649 8958.**

18 SEPT London 'Leg it against the bomb' 10 mile sponsored slog for CND around Hyde Park from 11am at Holland Park. 4pm-5pm decorated legs comp. Find sponsors. **Forms available from CND, 11 Goodwin St, N4 3HQ Carol Freeman 01-263 0977.**

22 SEPT London 'Sexuality and Self-Identity in Feminist Politics: Past and Present' first of 24-week course. 6.30 pm at 42 Queen Square, WC1. Tutors: Sally Alexander and Barbara Taylor. **Details 01-828 3735.**

23-25 SEPT Bristol 'Politics and the Locality' Wkend Conf. **Org. Dept of Extra-Mural Studies University of Bristol in assoc. with The Politics Assoc.**

23-25 SEPT Keele '14-18: The New Vocationalism in School and Further Education'. ATSS Annual Conf at The University of Keele, Staffs. **Details: D. Glasson 0782 621111 Extn. 299. Org. Assoc. for the Teaching of Social Science.**

24 SEPT Leicester 'Childbirth Today' Michel Odent – pioneer of active birth in France. 10-12.30pm £5. Org Leicester Active Birth Conf, 9 Cross Green, Rothley, Leicester. 0533 374285. ALSO 3pm at Ivanhoe College, Ashby.

29 OCT Oxford 'Artful Theology: a Feminist Re-creation of Christian Tradition' at Old Fire Station, George St. Women Only. 10am onwards. Spkrs incl. Sara Maitland, Julia Brosnan, Anne Parsons. Dscn. Exhibition, Events, Bkstall. Creche on demand. Wheelchair access and toilets. Disabled sisters please contact in advance. £3/£2 unwaged. **Details: Anne Parsons, 29 Hurst St, Oxford OX4 1HA Patricia Duncker 0865 727426.**

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